

M A R A T H A

M U R A L S

(Late Medieval Painting of the Deccan : 1650-1850 A.D.)



By

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

By about the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the process of the rejuvenation of Maratha Culture had begun. Within another twenty five years it was in full swing. The last quarter of the century witnessed the full revival of Maratha Culture. Of the various branches of culture that came into their own at this time was the art of painting. References to patronage to painting occur in contemporary records and a number of examples of mural painting are also extant. This branch had not received the attention it deserved

till now. Goetz¹ was the first modern scholar to point out the need to investigate the artistic remains of this period. Of these architecture and the wood-carving² that was attached to it have already been studied. I undertook an extensive survey of the Maratha homeland to examine the remains of murals and the results are presented in the following pages.

Before proceeding to a discussion of these murals it would be proper to review the political, social and cultural condition of Maharashtra under the Marathas so as to understand their art in it's right perspective.

Since this thesis is the first scientific record of the murals extant today, it was thought necessary to present all the data, even at the cost of some repetition and a good deal of enlargement of size.

P O L I T I C A L H I S T O R Y .

Maharashtra as it stands today is a roughly triangular area bounded by the river Narmada on the North, the river Krishna on the South, the Arabian Sea on the West but no geographical feature on the East - it is a rough line joining Goa and Orissa. The Maratha power, however, had its cradle in the western parts of this region i.e. in and around the western Ghats.

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The history of the region begins with the rise of Satvahana dynasty³ which ruled the region from the second century B.C. upto the second century A.D.. Then the region came under the rule of Chalukyas, Rashtrakuta and Yadav dynasties and finally it passed under the alien Islamic suzerainty with the fall of the Yadavas of Devgiri in the beginning of thirteenth century. For a period of about three and half centuries the region was under the sway of Islamic rulers. During the earlier part of this period the sultans of Delhi ruled (till A.D. 1312). Then came the Bahmani dynasty. After a period of one and half centuries the Bahmani dynasty disintegrated into five independent muslim states of which three existed when the Marathas came into their own. These three kingdoms were known as the kingdoms of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golkonda.⁴

The Marathas⁵ who were the local habitants of the region and whose main occupation was agriculture, also earned reputation as tough and hardy soldiers and were widely employed in the armies and administration of local Islamic rulers. Some of the Marathas rose to very high positions in the courts and armies of the Sultans and became influential and powerful. The alien rulers had secured the help of the hereditary Hindu Chieftains and government officials like the Deshmukhs, Patils and Deshpandes. The Maratha Chiefs accepted subordinate

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positions under the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan, but in the process had built themselves up as a wealthy and powerful aristocracy. On this solid foundation Shivaji (1630 - 1680 A.D.) built up his swarajya. From his time onwards until the rise of the Britishers the Marathas remained as the most prominent political power in the country. With an army made largely of farmers and fishermen Shivaji built up his kingdom. After the death of Shivaji his son Sambhaji (1681 - 1689 A.D.) succeeded to the throne, but was captured and put to a cruel death, by Aurangjeb in 1689 A.D. The young heir to the throne, Shahu and his mother Yesubai were kept prisoners by the Mughal emperor for a long period of seventeen years. With the return of Shahu (1707 - 1749 A.D.) in 1707 A.D. from the captivity of the Mughal to his paternal kingdom a new era of conquest and territorial expansion began. And the Marathas under their able leaders the Peshwas, the Shindes, the Holkars etc. carried out campaigns of conquest all over the land. The first phase of Maratha history which began with the rise of Chhatrapati Shivaji ended with the death of Chhatrapati Sambhaji. Chhatrapati Shahu's accession marks the beginning of the second phase of Maratha rule. This second phase is also known as the Peshwa period or ' Peshwai ' in our history.

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Chhatrapati Shahu was an ease-loving king and handed over the responsibilities of the kingdom to his prime-ministers, the Peshwas. His first peshwa was Balaji Vishwanath (1714 - 1720 A.D.) who helped the Chhatrapati to strengthen his position in Maharashtra and established peaceful relations with the Delhi emperors. The Peshwas or the prime-ministers soon took over control of the state affairs. From this time onwards the Peshwaship became practically hereditary, although the ritual of appointment by the king was followed scrupulously till the very end. The second Peshwa, Bajirao I (1720 - 1740 A.D.), the son of Balaji Vishwanath, was a military genius and expanded the Maratha empire multifold. Far more important than his military successes was his success in establishing a new nobility. It was this class of feudal lords, spread over a wide expanse of central India, that served as the basis for further expansion. The third Peshwa Balaji Bajirao alias Nanasahab (1761⁴⁰ - 1772⁶¹ A.D.) who was famous as an able statesman, could not survive the shock of the disaster at Panipat. Madhavrao I (1740⁶¹ - 1761⁷² A.D.), his successor, was a brilliant young man, tried to regain for the Maratha empire, what was lost at Panipat. But he was short-lived. From the death of Madhavrao onwards the history of the Marathas rolls in the direction of decline. Madhavrao's brother and successor, Narayanrao (1772-1773 A.D.) was assassinated by his ambitious uncle Raghobadada.

Raghobadada enjoyed the Peshwaship for a few months but it soon passed on ^{to} the posthumous son of Peshwa, Narayanrao. Nana Phadnis, the able statesman, took all the responsibility of running the nation on behalf of the infant Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao.

During this period Mahadji Shinde and Malharrao Holkar played an important role in the politics of the nation. They protected the interests of the Marathas in the North India and helped forge a closer link with that region.

After the death of Sawai Madhavrao who died at an early age, the Peshwaship went to Bajirao the second (1795 - 1818 A.D.), the son of Raghobadada. Peshwa Bajirao was neither a good administrator nor was he an able general. He lost the Maratha kingdom in 1818 to the Britishers.

C U L T U R A L A N D S O C I A L B A C K G R O U N D .

The course of cultural development⁶ which could be treated back to the distant past in the region, became stagnant for a few centuries in the medieval period. Since the local people accepted a subordinate position under the alien rulers by the thirteenth century, the chances of the development of their society and culture diminished. Loss

of political power, consequent loss of economic power and the active religious hostility of the rulers did not allow the people even to think of things like art and culture. In a period which was full of wars vandalism, loot, torture and proselytisation, it became difficult to preserve what was gained in the past. Disruption of normal agricultural activity due to constant warfare, famins and draughts made the situation worse. There was neither peace nor security that are required for any kind of cultural development.

Inspite of the Islamic rule and the alien culture they brought, the religion and character of the Marathas survived, some cultural traditions also continued. For this, credit perhaps goes to the saints and philosophers of the region, especially of the warkari sect[†], who spread the message of devotion to one personal god Vitthal. This path of devotion led to a social coherence never before experienced. It also made society immune to foreign cultural influences, evil as well as healthy. The sense of unity created by the saint poets of Maharashtra undoubtedly helped Shivaji in his effort to build up an independent state. The Maratha class thus emerged as one of the important political powers in the country, but retained its cultural identity.

During the second phase of the Maratha empire some basic changes took place in the political attitude

of the Marathas which not only affected political history but also their own social and cultural life. The rise of several feudatory states and a new feudal nobility during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu had their impact on the culture of the Marathas. The centralized monarchy of Shivaji gave way to a system of decentralized feudatory states. Land was distributed among the various feudatory chiefs, noblemen and ministers. They paid a fixed part of their earnings to the royal treasury but retained the rest. Due to this system there grew a tendency to model the provincial capital along the same lines as the royal court. Through the numerous military campaigns, these noblemen collected enough wealth and could freely indulge in the luxuries current in the prominent courts of the country. They developed the places under their domination and constructed huge residential palaces, pleasure resorts, temples, ghats etc. All these buildings were decorated according to the popular fashion of the day.

Forces from North India provided a new dimension to the course of cultural development of the Marathas. Chhatrapati Shahu, unlike his predecessors, was not bitter towards the Mughals, on the contrary he was a great admirer of their art, culture and life style. The luxuries and the cultural trends of northern India received encouragement in his court which also provided standards of life style

to other noblemen. In fact North India had started attracting the Marathas as early as in the second half of the seventeenth century. However, they had no occasion to extend their sway to the North beyond the frontiers of the Maratha homeland. With the advent of the Peshwas to the North contact with that region became far more intimate. The second Peshwa Bajirao I established Maratha supremacy in Malwa, Bundelkhand, Gujarat, etc. Bajirao I left Ranoji Shinde at Ujjain, Malharrao Holkar at Indore and Udaji Pawar at Dhar as his deputies to establish Maratha power on a firm footing and to realise the annual dues known as Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. These persons were in constant contact with the Satara and Poona darbars. They not only carried wealth from the North but also the court fashions, life-style and cultural trends of North India to Maharashtra. Peshwa Bajirao I himself maintained excellent relations with Rajasthani courts.⁷ He and his family members visited Rajasthani courts and undertook pilgrimages to various centres in the North and thus had occasions to see the flourishing courts and culture of the region. Bajirao I besides being a great soldier was an enlightened person and had a deep appreciation for scholarship as well as for things of art and the luxuries of material life. He patronized art and artists from North India. From his period onwards visits of the Marathas to the north became

more frequent, mainly for political reasons, often for pilgrimage. There emerged a status consciousness among the Marathas and the status symbols they adopted, were derived from the well established practices of the northern courts. An interesting fact of this trend becomes visible in the later part of this period. Under the third Peshwa the Marathas directed their attention to the south as well and various noblemen were established in north Karnatak. From this region southern influences, religious and cultural, reached the Maratha land.

One can however never forget that this love for fine arts and refinement among the Maratha aristocracy was not a matter of novelty or a contemporary fashion. It had deeper roots in Maratha society. And these are reflected in the literature of the land which is discussed slightly later on. Individual taste also mattered. The Peshwa Raghunathrao, the last two Peshwas and their ministers especially Nana Phadnavis, contributed substantially to the new cultural movement. Thus the higher classes valued things of art and collected works of literature. Art and scholarship both received every encouragement. One of the aspects of this movement was the love for painting. There are interesting references in Maratha records which tell us about their keenness to acquire miniatures and illustrated manuscripts from the

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northern centres of painting.

By 1786 A.D. Maratha society had come into contact with another foreign culture - European. Sir Charles Malet, the British resident at Poona introduced European science, art and medicine into Maratha society⁸. Malet induced the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao to establish a school of art in his palace under the supervision of a British artist, Wales. Several local artists received training of painting here.

As part of this artistic revival and along with other art forms, the art of mural painting also received encouragement. This art form which existed in the region since early times acquired a new aspect in the eighteenth century. In the beginning the royalty, aristocracy and affluent class, appreciated and patronised it as a fashion of the day but soon orthodox Maratha society accepted it as a regular item of interior decoration.

Unfortunately the duration of the second phase of the Maratha rule was quite short and hence like other forms - especially architecture, the art of mural painting, could not get sufficient time to blossom.

C O N T E M P O R A R Y R E C O R D S.

These cultural trends find a twofold reflection in the extant monuments and in literary records. The monuments are discussed as the main body of the dissertation. The second aspect, that is the records, are to be noted here in brief. These are not to be confused with descriptions in works of a literary nature. The vast amount of domestic and government records of the Peshwas and their chiefs that have come down to us make numerous references to the execution of murals, employment of artists for the purpose, payments made to them etc. A few of the more significant references are mentioned below:

1) One Shivram Krishna reports to Bajirao, in reply to his queries, regarding the progress of the work of the construction of the Shaniwar Palace. He informs that the main hall of the palace was painted, floral motifs were being executed and finally a coat of oil-paint (varnish ?) would be given.⁹

2) Jiwaji Ganesh Khasgiwale writes to the Peshwa about the painters who were commissioned to do the paintings. He writes that Ragho, Tanhaji and Anuprao all were good artisans. Further he adds that the artisans were expert in various skills required for the erection and decoration of a building which included painting, oil painting etc.¹⁰

3) Raghunathrao asks Nana Phadnis to make arrangements to send the painter Mankoji to Trimbak where he was ordered to execute some paintings. These must be wall paintings as he also instructs Nana to send the material, required for the work which include a stool also.¹¹

4) Record of a payment made to the painter Sadashiv Chitari who had executed the murals on the five gates of the ' Ramana ' and also on the walls of the verandhas in that structure.¹²

5) Record of a payment made to painters Dhanaji and Bapu Chitari on a daily-wage basis for the execution of the wall paintings at the time of the thread ceremony of Khajgiwale's son.¹³

6) An agreement between the owner of the Tulshibag temple at Pune and an artist from the Vetar Peth in the town, one Kataba Tukaram, son of Ramji Chitari. The date of the agreement is 18th March 1826. He has agreed to first clean, then white-wash and finally cover the wall surfaces with paintings. These were to be enframed within floral borders. The wall surfaces involved are the space on either side of the entrance gateways and the portico in front. The artist is also to treat the wooden pillars and arches. Wherever required brass rosettes were to be attached.¹⁴

The above references are selected so as to cover the period of well over a century, 1718 to 1826 and also so as to touch on various aspects like artists, materials, modes of payment etc. There are a large number of similar references but are not reproduced here as it would merely be a repetition of the same information. Information called from these records fills up any small gaps that extant remains and literary descriptions might leave.

R E L I G I O U S B A C K G R O U N D .

Since ancient times, the art of wall-painting has been utilized to beautify buildings. Indeed so popular had it become that there grew up a popular tradition that the walls of building must bear paintings of a few traditional themes if it was to be free from evil spirits. These themes were mainly of a religious character¹⁵ - deities incidents from mythological literature, erotic scenes and a few decorative motifs . Like its sister art, sculpture, painting also was used in the service of religion, to convey the myths and the message of a religious sect. The most famous example is that of the murals in the Ajanta caves, which glorify the Buddha and Buddhism. It is no wonder that temple walls would bear depictions of religious themes, but even domestic architecture used the same or similar motifs. It becomes necessary to say a few

words about the religious conditions of the Maratha land as the themes sprung forth from religion. One can not say that any religious revival led to the sudden spurt in the art of murals during the eighteenth century. But it is equally true that it provided the subject-matter for, and quite often, the urge to execute murals.

The ~~twelfth~~^{twelfth} and thirteenth centuries witnessed the rise of various sects and cults in Maharashtra. The Mahanubhava sect, the Nath Panth, the Datta cult, all originated during this period. Of these, Vaishnavism, with the Vitthal of Pandharpur as its focal point became the most popular.¹⁶

At this stage mention may be made of the doctrine of 'the nine-fold devotion' (नवविधा भक्ती) of Vaishnavism. This nine-fold path of Bhakti has been accepted, directly or indirectly, by most of the sects of Bhaktimarga as essential for concentrations of the mind and the body on the practice of 'devotion'.¹⁷ ((1) श्रवण (2) कीर्तन (3) स्मरण (4) जर्जना (5) वन्दना (6) दास्य (7) सख्य (8) पादसेवन (9) आत्मनिवेदन)¹⁸ Like other regions this doctrine had its impact on Maharashtra also.¹⁸

As is wellknown this path of 'Bhakti' not only influenced the religious and social life of the people but also inspired the "fine arts". This doctrine

prescribes, along with other steps, the continuous remembrance of god by singing aloud his name (कीर्तन, स्मरण) or listening to the accounts of the 'lilas' of the deities. For कीर्तन and स्मरण , the literary forms were used by tradition. Necessity of the depiction of the 'lila' in their visual form is not mentioned by this Path, but there is little doubt that the same philosophy inspired the presentation of the 'lilas' of god in visual forms. Thus the art forms like dance, drama, painting etc. of this period were also devoted to the manifestation of the 'lilas' of god. The execution of 'lilas' of god on the walls of the building was considered as one of the most interesting, direct and effective method to obtain nearness to the god. Hence the art of wall-painting attained great popularity among the Hindu patrons of the region which were mostly under the impact of Vaishnavism. The region of Maharashtra was as mentioned earlier among one such regions. Maratha society was influenced by the Bhakti cult at various levels. According to the mental standard, financial condition and taste of different classes of society various art forms emerged giving expression to ' Bhakti '.

जेणे करुनि मूर्ति ठसावी अंतरी श्रीहरिची ।

अशी कीर्तन मयादा आहे संतांच्या घरची ॥ 19

In rural society Kirtan, the Dashavatari drama Citrakathi performances mural decorations depicting lilas of the deity god established as the part of social tradition. However, aristocratic society patronized more sophisticated forms of devotion which along with other popular forms include all the branches of painting, viz. manuscript illustration, miniature painting and mural painting. In the present context our interest is restricted to mural painting only.

The source of these paintings naturally was the religious literature of the period. It was of two types, pseudo-classical (पण्डिती) and pseudo-folk (साहिती). In both, the theme most popular was the life and deeds of Krishna especially the dalliance of Krishna and Radha or Krishna and Gopis.²⁰ These motifs, literary and painted, could be traced back to the writings of poets like Jayadev and Vidyapati who in their own turn have drawn extensively on the Bhagavata Purana. This Purana was composed somewhere in the tenth century and has indeed served as the very basis for all subsequent literary and artistic creation. Hindi literature - the so called ' Riti ' ²¹ poetry is based on it. Rajasthani artists and those from the hill states have made good use of this poetry. The same is valid for Maratha land. A discussion of the subject matter follows in a subsequent section. Here the impact of religious cults

and literature is indicated.

THE TRADITION.

At this stage it is necessary to find out what the Marathas had inherited from the previous centuries. Almost all extant specimens of mural painting executed under the patronage of the Marathas fall in the second phase of their rule i.e. the eighteenth century A.D. whereas little is known of the earlier phase. This is so because of the structures that were built before this period are rarely in extant now. Hence we are ignorant about the existence or otherwise of murals on them. From the number of buildings of the second phase which possess mural decorations, it is quite clear that the tradition of wall-painting was prevalent not as a matter of luxury but as a necessary convention, among the people of Maharashtra. On a superficial examination it would appear that mural tradition emerged abruptly during the last phase of the Maratha rule. Apart from the large number of extant specimens of this period, it is wellknown that during the said period due to the political and cultural contacts with other provincial courts of the country, cultural and art trends of other regions percolated into Maharashtra. As such the temptation is great to think that the influence of other contemporary, especially of Northern schools of

painting was responsible for the rise of the art of mural painting in Maharashtra. Stylistic similarity between some features, quite evident in the mural works of Maharashtra and of Northern India tends to support such a presumption. At first sight this assumption seems quite logical and convenient to accept but things are not so as is shown below. It is true that the influence of Northern schools is very much there, in the mural work of this region. But this may be said at the most, about some stylistic aspect of the work. It does not prove that the tradition itself was imported from the North. Due to the contacts with Northern art trends the form of mural painting underwent some changes and perhaps became more popular, but the existence of local tradition of mural painting is proved beyond doubt, by sources other than monumental - literary. To trace the history of wall painting in this region we have to take notice of direct as well as indirect literary evidence.

The mural paintings of Ajanta are the earliest direct examples of mural painting in the region. These outstanding ancient murals cover a period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. After these specimens from Ajanta, fragmentary examples of murals, appear at Ellora which were executed sometime during the eighth century to the tenth century A.D. Then there is a

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long gap of nearly eight centuries, in which we do not get examples of mural work.

The region has a vast amount of literature beginning from the second century B.C. As mentioned earlier, we get direct examples of early period at Ajanta and Ellora. Literature contemporary to this period, also gives information about the mural painting.

In this context mention may be made first of The "Gathasaptashati" which is a compilation of gathas, by the Satvahana king Hala, in Maharashtri Prakrit and approximately dated to the second century B.C. In this work dealing mainly with amorous themes, glimpses of contemporary culture are found in abundance. In one of the couplets, the poet cites the example of an artist who is not perfect in his skill.

वण्णक्कम्म आणासि ठाणक्किद्धी वि देणित्वडिआ

चित्रम् । तद्वि मग्गसि मोज्जिणि कुड्डम्मि आलिहिंड ॥

('Gathasaptasati; 732)²²

He does not know how to prepare the ground for the painting. He does not know even the right sequence of the colours and wants to paint the picture.

From the above reference it is quite evident that during those times, an artist was expected to master

all the aspects of the technique of mural painting. In the same work a verse describes a ' Kulavadhu ' or housewife who depicts, the deeds of Laxmana on the walls of her house (Gathasaptashati, 35). At another place a good friend is compared to an image painted on the wall.(217).

In ' Lilawai ' (A.D. 800), another work in Maharashtri Prakrit, references to wall paintings appear. The Pradhan Nayikas wanting to depict Madana, the god of love, unwittingly paint the portrait of the handsome hero, the Satvahana prince. At one place another tender description occurs. The wall painting of the house get hazy and blurred on account of the constant shower of pollen of the flowers ! Every time ^{the} breeze sweeps in, it brings in a veritable rain of pollen that cover the painted walls.

अहणवर तत्त दोसो नं कियसिय

कुसुम रेणु पडलेण ।

मर्जलिज्जति समीरण - क्लेण घर चित्र मित्तिओ ॥ २३

Probably the earliest mention of mural painting in a Jaina temple in the region comes from the work Yashastilak of Somdeva, Suri, which is written by him during the reign of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, probably by 959 A.D. In Book V of this work mural paintings on the walls of a Jaina temple are described. These are of two

categories. The first category gives us the portraits of wellknown figures from Jaina legends and mythology while in the second category most of the dreams are represented seen by the mother of Rishbha. Somadeva also makes some interesting references to the technical side of painting. In the course of his descriptions of the temple murals he refers to two technical terms,

'Rupagunanika' (the study of figure) and 'Parshvagata'²⁴ (profile or the side view proper) being one of the nine different positions in which the figure appears. The term 'Parshvagata' is also mentioned in the "Vishnudharmottara" Purana²⁴ (39, Part III) as one of the nine 'poses' or body-positions, it recognises.

Another work which belongs to the Rashtrakuta period is 'Vividhanand', by 'Shilang' (**शीलंग**). This play is written sometime between the ninth and tenth centuries. The hero of the story is a Rashtrakuta prince named Laxmidhar. The hero and heroine of the play depict each other's portraits on the same wall.²⁵

Till this time there are murals of even date but henceforth we do not get specimens of mural paintings and have to depend solely on literary references of mural painting for the next few centuries.

Among such works Manasollasa of the twelfth century is of great importance.²⁶ It is not a literary work but a work of an encyclopaedic nature, written by the Western Chalukya king Someshvara in Sanskrit. The work contains, important technical information about mural painting. In the third chapter, the author deals with the preparation of the wall, the ~~e~~^xecution of painting along with the preparation of the ' Vajralepa ' (adamantinepaste), brushes, pure and mixed colours etc. The information given by this work, leaves no doubt that mural painting was not only practised in the region, but was a branch to which considerable thought was given and which was quite a developed form of expression.

Next, one has to turn to works in the Marathi language. Marathi is a late variant of Maharashtra Prakrit and has a regular history dating back from the twelfth century. The prevailing mood of Marathi mediaeval literature is mainly devotional and deals with philosophical themes.²⁷ In the works of such a nature there is less scope for cultural information but even then the influence of contemporary culture in which the authors breathed automatically appears in their works whenever a chance occurs. Along with other items references to mural painting are also frequent in these works.

The early phase of Marathi literature is dominated by the poets of the Mahanubhava sect. The sayings of Chakradhara, the founder of the Mahanubhava sect, are compiled by his disciples. In one such work named 'Acharsthala ; Chakradhara advises not to see a woman even in a lifeless depiction. Even her lifeless image painted on the wall was to be avoided.²⁸

चित्रीची स्त्री न पहावी
चीत्रीचि अथ मीतीसी लीहीले
जड रुपडे ते ही न पहावे

सूत्र ११३०११

In the 'Lilacharita', a collection of biographical anecdotes of Chakradhara, drawing of peacocks on the wall is mentioned.²⁹ While the book ' Smritisthala ' of the fourteenth century informs us that in the temple of Kalankeshvara at Alajpur the eighty four hells were depicted on the walls.³⁰

One of the most famous works of this period is ofcourse the Jnaneshvari,³¹ by the great poet philosopher Jnaneshvara. It is interesting to note that in this book, which is a paraphrase ^{and critical exposition} of the Bhagavatgita, mural paintings are often cited for explaining some abstract ideas. In one of the verses, the poet mentions that the painting on the wall gets reduced to dust with the collapse of the wall itself. ³¹

पडोनि गेलिया मिती । चित्राची केवळ होय माती ।

" Once the wall collapses, the picture (painted on it) is reduced to dust " (Jnaneshvari, 263/18) and further,

का त्यजुनि मीतिमात्र । त्याजिजे बाधे चित्र

" Why destroy the whole painting by demolishing the wall " (Jnaneshvari, 131/16)

In his other famous work ' Anubhavamrit ', also he alludes to a forest scene painted on the walls.

“बने चित्रीची” 32 Anubhavamrit, 101, 102.

The works of the so called pandit poets, differ from the works of the saint poets of Marathi. These are mainly based on the Sanskrit works, therefore one may be tempted to assume that the cultural references which appear in the works of these poets, belong to the age of classical Sanskrit literature. But the details of the description and the extensive use of Marathi terms, prove that the cultural references in these works had relevance to contemporary local culture. Some poets took the themes from Sanskrit literature but gave it a new form. In such works glimpses of local culture are to be found in abundance. The poet Chobha is one of this type and his

name has a special significance from our point of view. In his work ' Usha-harana ', he has not only mentioned mural paintings but has described most vividly the contemporary technique of mural painting. The work belongs to the period between 1378 A.D. to 1428 A.D. Its theme, ' Usha-harana ', the love story of Usha and Aniruddha is originally narrated in the ' Harivamsa ' and in the ' Bhagawata-Purana ' in great details.

To identify the sweet-heart of princess Usha, whom she saw in her dream her friend Chitralekha plans to picturise, all the kings and princes of the three worlds. In this context the poet gives a beautiful description of the preparation of the wall by Chitralekha.

चीत्र लीहावेयाची आजीती केली । नीट मीती कापडीली ।
 षडी सारुनी घोंटाळी । कर्त षडी मेळ्वीली ॥
 षडी पाची हींगुळ बळीता । नीळी मन्सीळ गोंदता ।
 म्सी डीकु दोडे घू केलिया लिफ्फाया बहुता ॥
 मीगी मारुनु केला संघ । मग आदरीले चीत्र रेघ ॥ ३३

Some words are obscure, a few others are not in common use now, and hence it is not possible to attempt a full and accurate translation of the verse. The utmost that can be done is to present a gist or substance.

For painting the pictures Chitralekha prepared

the wall surface through a special process. In this process first she applies a piece of cloth on the wall. Over this ground, she applies two coats of lime. The word Bhingi (भींगी), which comes in the fifth line is somewhat confusing. Normally it means ' yellow wall ', but this meaning does not go well in the present context. Perhaps it means yellow clay. The final coat spoken of above, would thus be that of yellow clay, as it is smooth enough to provide a suitable texture for colour work. After the application of the final coat, the surface of the wall is burnished with conch powder, so as to make its texture more smooth and also to get a shine over it. For the painting she collects following colours, Shadi- (पडी) white, Pachi (पाची)- green, Hingula (हिंगुल) crude cinabar or vermilion, Alita (अलीता) red lak (Lac-dye) Nili (नीली) Blue indigo, Manseel (मन्सील)- red arsenic and Masi (मसी) - black ink. Other materials consist of gum as a medium for the pigments and cotton pads for applying large patches of pigments within the outlines. After the completion of the preparation, Chitralkha starts the execution of the painting.

In this verse application of the cloth on the wall is mentioned. This practice is rarely heard of. But is not quite unknown. Evidence of this practice is to be found at Ajanta. In cave no.11, at Ajanta pieces of fiber

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have been found in the plaster on the walls. The purpose of applying cloth, on the plaster may be to enhance the durability of the surface and to make it even. Spink³⁴ thinks that the cloth was applied in order to improve or to repair some area of the mud surface. However this reference from 'Ushaharana ' makes it clear that it was used as a regular component. The pigments mentioned by Chobha were in use since early times, but in the colour pallet given by him, yellow is absent,. Perhaps yellow clay was used for the areas intended to be yellow.

Chobha's description cannot be expected to be either complete or accurate in every respect. In ' Manasollasa ', the technique of wall painting is described as a matter of scientific knowledge, Chobha is putting it down more or less in passing, his main concern is a poetic theme, not academic discussion of murals. Since ' Ushaharana ' is a work of poetry and it's main aim is to tell the story of the love of Usha and Aniruddha.

Chobha's description is important in that, it shows that mural painting was quite a popular art and also as it gives glimpses of the prevalent technique of mural painting. In the original story, narrated by the ' Harivamsa ', Chitrlekha uses a drawing board, ' चित्रपट ' for the painting. But Chitrlekha in Chobha's poem, paints

pictures on the wall, quite obviously because mural painting was the more common medium of expression in the society which Chobha knew. It seems that the use of a Chitrapata for the painting by Chitralkha of the original story was ignored by later poets, because they were more familiar with murals in their day to day life. The poet Nandan who is probably contemporary to Chobha or belongs to a slightly later period has used the same theme, that of Ushaharana. In his work also the friend of Usha, paints the picture on the wall. For this she prepares the surface and then fills in the proper colours. The same type of description although slightly differing in details, occurs in the 'lavani' on Usha by the 18th century poet Honaji Bala.³⁵

मिती घोडोने सुटाव । नानन सप्त रंगपात्र
चित्री लिहून दाविली.

The 'Rukmini Swayamvar' of Krishnamuni (1602 A.D.) is quite important as it informs us about another aspect of mural painting - their subject matter. He describes citrashalas and halls with paintings on their walls. In one of the verses he describes a representation of the three worlds which include depictions of deities and human beings as well. At one place erotic postures are mentioned as having been painted on the walls.

इतिशमन जळ्याची आसने कामचिनी
 त्रिभुवन रचना ते दासती चित्रालोळी
 सुरनर ४५रंगाची रूपडी नाममेळी
 झळकती ठकडी ते मितिमंगी सुडाळी
 भितरी नृपति विवे गोरनीळी

रत्नकिणी स्वयंवर ११४०११

The Mahanubhava poet Alhana of the same century in his work, named " Ashtanayikavivah," gives description of the palace of Jambuvant. In the course of this description he mentioned that the citrashalas of this palace contained pictures of the ' Ramayana,'.

दक्षीण वीमागी सुगंधाची नवरंग चौब्रशाळा रामाजेणार्ची

दक्षनायिका विवाह ११४०११

We do not get any direct evidence about the mural work during the seventeenth century i.e. under Shivaji or his times. However, Swami Ramdas in his composition entitled " Karkhana " deals with the construction of a mansion. While describing the plan of a mansion or palace he mentions the provision of citrashala and prescribes murals on various subjects and the introduction of floral motives within them. Roughly contemporary is the " Rukmini-Harana " of Samraj (1668 A.D.). It mentions that temple walls were painted with mythological themes.³⁹ The work " Krishnamanjari " of

Pratapsing (1736 - 1763 A.D.) also speaks of the convention of depicting, beautiful colourful paintings of various subjects on the walls of the city on the auspicious and happy occasions.⁴⁰ The work " Ter-Mahatmya " (तैर महात्म्य) which belongs to the eighteenth century tells us about the belief underlying the depiction in a temple. According to the poet, to have wall paintings in a Shiva temple is a meritorious act. He claims that the person who causes paintings of religious subjects to be executed on the walls goes to the Shivaloka after his death. He further adds that only those themes that are prescribed by the 'Shastras' and those of ^{The} 'Dasha-avatars' should be painted on the walls of the temples.⁴¹ The themes prescribed by the Shastras perhaps denote the themes from puranic literature like ' Rasalila ', ' Samudramanthana ', scenes from the ' Ramayana ' and the ' Mahabharata ' etc. which are to be found in the murals of the eighteenth century. Temples were thus considered to be the proper place for conveying to the common people the message of mythology, through the depiction of these various incidents. Murals were also regarded as one of the conspicuous aspect of interior decoration of luxurious mansions. The eighteenth century poet Prabhakar gives the following description.⁴²

छतलानि रुदार रुजामे, चित्र बहारदास्त.

He further says,

बांन सुतने सूत्र नकासून साधिले
त-हे त-हेचे रंग छता प्रति दिघले ।

These lines tell that paintings covered not only the walls but the ceilings and pillars also. There are extent halls answering the above description. A large number of similar references occur but they are of the same date as Prabhakar and give the same information and hence have not been quoted in extenso.

All these references make it quite clear that there existed ^{an} indigenous tradition of mural painting and that it had a continuous existence since the early times upto the period under discussion.

Artist :-

The tradition of mural painting thus has a long history and the existence of a community of artists is as such beyond question.

In the feudal pattern of society, generally every village or town had its own set of artisans who were meeting the demands of daily needs of it's population. According to the prevalent system, these artisans were paid annually at the time of harvest in terms of food grains. These hereditary workers were known as Balutedars and included the

blacksmith, potter, carpenter, flower vendor, coppersmith, tailor, Bangle vendor, mason, temple incharge, saddle maker etc.⁴³ From a record of 1788 A.D. we know that the painter was also included in the list of such artisans (although more generally the jingar or saddle maker also doubled as a painter).⁴⁴ It clearly shows that the services of the painters were required in the social pattern of the village or town. The painters were assigned the task of painting the walls of houses and temples at the time of the festivals on auspicious occasions or at the time of some social functions. The painters carried on the profession like other artisans on hereditary basis and held no better status than other groups. The painter was known by the designation Chitari (चितारि). As mentioned above sometime the jingar (जिगर) or saddle maker used to do the painting work, as he had the training of both the arts, that of saddle-making and of the painter.⁴⁵ But it seems that this class of artists was of very ordinary calibre. They adopted painting as a side business. Even upto the present period the traditional families of painters known as 'jingar' carry out the ritual and decorative painting at the time of marriage thread ceremony etc. for their Hindu customers, but do not attempt anything aesthetically superior.

The position of the artists was a bit different in places of political and cultural importance. People tended to ignore the local artists, there was a fascination

for the artists from the North and especially from Rajasthan. This was more so with the aristocratic and affluent classes of the early Peshwa period. Later on, artists from the South were also welcomed as is evidenced by their handiwork. References to the employment of 'foreign' artists available in the historical records of the Marathas have already been listed. As we have seen there, the fashion started with Bajirao I who commissioned an artist, named Bhojaraja from Jaipur, to execute paintings on the walls of the Shaniwar Wada, his palace.⁴⁶

At the other extreme is Nana Phadnavis who was a great lover of art. He had not only tried to acquire good paintings from the art centres like Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Jaipur etc. but also tried to secure the services of the artist Bhojaraja of Jaipur court. There is an interesting correspondence between Nana Phadnavis and his agent in North India. In his letters, Nana asked the latter to acquire miniatures and illustrated manuscripts from other centres and also to bring Bhojaraja for the Poona Darbar. He further instructed him to use the good offices of Mahadaji ^{Shinde} ~~Sinde~~ regarding this matter.⁴⁷ The above mentioned reference is also indicative of the prevalent practice among the Marathas of collecting miniatures and illustrated manuscripts from various centres of art.⁴⁸ These works of art were usually acquired by direct purchase or by placing

orders for particular types of work. Presents and loots also brought a good number of specimens for these collections. The artists and these art objects, must have exercised a profound influence on the work of the local artists. The eclectic nature of the albums possessed by the Marathas and also murals can be understood only against this background. But inspite of this, it was not always practical and was also ^{their being} costly to engage artists from other provinces. Secondly, local artists were quite proficient in their work. The names of a few of them have come down to us. During the reign of Peshwa Madhavrao I, the royal court had employed one Mankoji Chitari, a local artist.⁴⁸ Raghobadada, his uncle, also had some artists in his personal service. He also found obtained the services of Mankoji Chitari, of Poona darbar to decorate his palace at Anandvalli near Nasik.⁴⁹ It clearly shows that there were several local artists in the Poona darbar, who were well-versed in their profession.

It seems, the person knowing the job of painting was often well/acquainted with other branches of interior decoration. We get three names of such artists, Ragho, Tanaji and Anuprao. They were proficient in four other types of work of interior decoration including painting.⁵⁰

According to the contemporary system, the work of painting a building was executed by a group of artists, headed by some master artist.

During the closing phase of Maratha rule, the Marathas came into contact with yet another tradition -- Western. Even earlier, they had received works of Western art as for instance the paintings received by Madhavrao I in 1768 A.D. But it was much later that this contact with the Western style of painting became much closer. The British resident at Poona, Sir Charles Malet, who was quite friendly with the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao, introduced a British artist. The artist, ^{wales} ~~wales~~ by name, painted portraits of the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao, Nana Phadnavis and Mahadaji Shinde ~~Sindia~~. Daniel, another British artist, painted fine picture of the Poona darbar for Malet from sketches by ⁵¹ ~~wales~~.

It seems the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao had developed a taste for the paintings of Western style and on the advice of Malet established an art school in the Shaniwar Palace. It is said that several local artists received training here under the supervision of ~~Wales~~. Among the artist students of this school, Gangaram Tambat was the most outstanding and the paintings of Ajanta and Ellora painted by him were presented to the then viceroy. ⁵¹ A

Detailed information of this art-school is not available in the records, therefore the exact nature of the training given by this school is not known. However,

it is a fair inference that the school must have imparted instruction in Western methods. But since no mural works executed in the Western style are extant we do not know how far the school was successful on the whole.

With the advent of the British rule the demand for mural work declined. People now preferred to ~~have~~ have oil-paintings or reproductions of paintings of Western style. However, it is customary to decorate the buildings with the traditional motifs at the time of religious festivals or some auspicious occasions. Thus the art of mural painting survived upto the present period in the hands of a few hereditary artists. At Poona there is an artist, named Manikrao Gulujkar, who is called upon often to decorate the walls of the buildings, by local customers. This old man of ninety years of age, draws pictures without any preliminary sketches. He has decorated the walls of several temples, private mansions, houses and Talims (gymnasiums) with mythological subjects, such as incidents from the Ramayana, the Mahabharat, Jnanesvari and scenes like Samudramanthan, Gopivastraharaⁿ, Ganapati with Ridhi^d and Sidhi^d etc.

Mural Tradition - Monumental

Literary references to the art of mural painting have already been taken into account. Here a reference is to be made to the various expressions of this art as found in the extant monuments. The world-famous frescos of Ajanta are our earlier extant record. Caves IX - X bear murals from the first-second centuries A.D. while numbers XVI, XVII, I and II preserve works dated to the 4th - 5th centuries A.D. These frescos depict Buddhist themes and are located in Maharashtra. However, it seems that the style of painting found at Ajanta was neither sectarian nor regional, that it was a part of the tradition prevalent all over the land. These murals consist mostly of narrative themes but whatever the subject, the rendering has a definite decorative effect. The approach of the artist is highly stylized and his handwork is marked by plasticity of form and beauty of line. His colour-schemes appear rather dull, today but perhaps suited the artists' purpose very well.

These murals undoubtedly served as the standard model for the artists of the later generations. Its two immediate off shoots are to be seen at Bagh and Badami. The former is in Madhya Pradesh and the Buddhist caves, those have preserved fairly extensive murals that are very much

in the Ajanta Style. Badami in Karnatak has some Brahmanical caves and in one of these, fragments of murals remain. These represent Shiva themes but do so in the Ajanta Style. The direct descendant of the Ajanta works are to be found at Ellora. The caves are removed by about a couple of centuries from Ajanta and are dated to VII - IX centuries.

The wall paintings of Ellora are not of a very high orders but in many respects provide an indication as to the nature of the transformation the art of wall painting was undergoing. The paintings as seen today are executed on different layers of wall plaster belonging to two different periods and display two different styles. The painting of the first layer, that of the early period shows a degenerated continuation of the Ajanta School. The specimens of painting of later period which too emerged from the same school are marked by changes in the physiognomical details like the typical narrow eyes and sharp, pointed noses and are more noteworthy on account of their representation of the three-quarter view. The style of the first layer was continued in the South Indian wall paintings while that of the later one was used for manuscript illustration and came to be known as the Western Indian School of painting.

In the field of art, art traditions of the Southern country and of the Northern region have some

distinct characteristics of their own. The art of wall painting is no exception to this. Hence the remains of medieval murals from both these regions are discussed separately. Finally reference would be made to Maratha murals.

Murals in the Southern country could be enumerated thus.

Pallava Painting (VIIIth.C.)

Pallava painting provides an important link in the sequence of medieval painting in the South. The Chief monuments of Pallava painting that survive are at Sittanavasal, Tirumalaipuram, and Kanchipuram. The style of these paintings, inspite of presence of elements from Ajanta style, shows many individual characteristics. Among them the most prominent is the sharply angular flat drawing of the figures.

Travancore (VIII- IX C.)

There are a few ruined fragments of painting in the rock-cut cave temple at Tirunankkara in Travancore. The artistic affinities of these works are closer to the remains at Badami.

Tanjore (XI - XII C.)

In the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore wall paintings of the chola dynasty survive. These are on the lower of the two layers. The upper layer which has fallen in places has murals of the Nayaka period. Both these paintings exhibit a subdued colour scheme and firm but expressive lines. These paintings mainly represent legends from the Shiva Purana.

Vijayanagara (XIII- XV C.)

After the Muslim invasions in India which began during the 10th c. and by 14th C. several Muslim kingdoms emerged. In the Deccan Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Colkonda dynasties got established. The only powerful Hindu kingdom of this period was Vijayanagar which survived till 1565. The mural painting under the Vijayanagar rulers are to be found at Lepakshi, Angundi, Tadpatri and Tiruparutikundram.

These paintings show a fusion of older Chola art and the Islamic schools of painting of the Deccan and painting of the early Deccani schools in its turn carries forward certain characteristics of the local trends fused with the safavid tradition from Persia. (Nuzum-ul-ulam 1570, The Tarif-Hussein Shahi and the Ragmala paintings in the Bikaner collection. Although it was miniature painting

that mainly flourished in the Deccani courts a few specimens of Deccani mural work survive even today. They are to be found in and in the water-pavillions at Kuntangi in the Asar-mahal and in the Ibrahim Rausa at Bijapur. In the latter structure only geometrical patterns and floral designs are to be seen.

Travancore (XVII C.)

Mural work of a late date exists in the Mattancheri palace at Cochin, preserves some wall paintings of 17th century in it's halls and corridors. In the 18th century fresh series of murals were executed. The main characteristics of the style of these paintings consist of harsh lines, deeply curved forms and use of intense tones of red, green, yellow and blue. Murals at Pallimana, Trichur, Ellumanur display more or less the same characteristics.

This very brief account of monumental evidence of mural painting in South India shows that the tradition of wall painting was continuous, almost without break. But in North India the picture seems to be different. The remains at Bagh have been already taken note of. The next monument noteworthy in this connection is the Vishnu temple at Madanpur⁵² (XV th C.) The wall paintings in this

temple are important not only as the earliest specimens of the medieval period but also as they show the extension of the Western Indian School in North. After this there is a span of a few centuries in which we do not get any monumental evidence. Contemporary literary works speak of wall paintings. Among such works, apart from technical treatises like the 'Samarangana Sutradhara', the most interesting is 'Tarikh-I-Firuj Shahi', which narrates that wall painting were executed in the palace of Firojshah Tughluq⁵³ (1351-1388 A.D.). But due to nonavailability of sufficient data, it is difficult to enumerate the nature of the murals in the first half of the medieval period in North India. As is well known, paper was introduced in India by the 13th century and it became the most popular medium for painting in the succeeding centuries. Evidence of wall paintings of this period either got perished or the technique itself had a lean time due to the growing popularity of miniature painting.

It is said that in the sixteenth century some Jesuit missionaries introduced the fresco technique of wall painting in the Mughal Court. Emperor Jahangir got his palace at Agra and his father's grave at Sikandara painted in fresco technique, depicting Christian subjects. Buildings at Agra were also decorated with murals. But the interest

of the Islamic rulers in wall painting seems to be less intense than what they evinced in miniature painting. During the next two centuries (i.e. 18th and 19th C.) the art of mural painting gained immense popularity in Northern India, as a whole (especially in the Hindu Courts). Specimens from almost all regions like Rajasthan, Pahadi region (Western Himalaya and Punjab), and Madhya Pradesh etc. have been noticed and discussed by various scholars.

Rajasthan :-

These murals show the great influence miniature painting had come to weild on murals. Both in respect of theme as well as style this impact is evident.

Bairat :-

The earliest frescoes were of the Jehangir period. The subject matter consists of following themes : Ragamala, hunting scenes, decorative motifs. There is an interesting picture of a standing lady wearing a hat. Four-pointed jama and turbans of Jehangiri period are noteworthy items of the costume.

Galta :-

Krishnalila themes deminate the murals of this place.

City Palace, Jaipur :-

A life-size painting of Maharaja Modhosing I with his court-ladies is the most noteworthy piece at this place. Other common themes appear in large numbers.

Pundriji Ki Haveli, Brahmapuri :-

The murals are done in secco style and the themes depicted are, Harem scenes. The rulers in a trolly dragged by ladies, seasons of the year (Baramasa), females in different postures and Maharaja Jaising with his courtiers.

Jagjeet Mahadeva and others in the City :-

The murals done in both techniques, fresco and secco, are to be found here. The subject matter consists of Baramasa, and scenes from Kamasutra etc.

Shekhawati :-

Mural painting seems to be very popular at this place as most of the houses have murals on their walls depicting themes like camels, Dholamaru, Panihari, ladies on swing and similar other subjects.

Alwar :-

This place preserves murals of the middle of the 19th century. The Darbar-e-khas hall of Sheeshmahal palace

contains wall paintings. The themes depicted are Krishnalila and Dashavatara. The other palace shows Ragamala, hunting scenes, elephant fights etc. on it's walls.

Rajghat :-

The murals done both in the fresco and secco techniques are found here which depict themes like Krishnalila toilet scenes, females in different postures, Musicians and Raja playing holi with females.

Mewar :-

It is said that the floral painting in the palace of Rana at Chitor belongs to 15th century and this is oldest in the region. In the haveli of Nayar Seth murals depicting elephant fight and Kamasutra themes are found. The Jagniwas palace (water palace) preserves a painting which shows Maharaja Bhimsing with two foreign girls. The walls of Udaipur palaces show scenes of hunting, processions, durbar, Ganagaur, elephants etc. A few other buildings also possess murals.

Nagore :-

Themes depicted in the murals of this place consist of royal ladies drinking in an orchard, females in erotic postures etc.

Jodhpur :-

A number of buildings in Jodhpur possess mural decorations of the themes popular in contemporary miniature paintings. Their other characteristics are not far different either.

Kota and Bundi :-

In Kota following are the important places where mural decoration is to be found. Jhala Ki Haveli, Rasik Behari, temple, Devta Shri Dhar mansion etc. The wall paintings of these building depict themes like the females engaged in various posttimes, drunken females wearing European caps, Kamasutra postures etc.

The Bundi murals display subjects like Baramasa, i.e. season of the year, Hunting expeditions, Bathing scene, Rasalila etc.

Pahadi Murals :-

Some districts of Western Himalayas and a few places of Puhjab possess extensive mural work done in Pahadi tradition during 18th and 19th centuries. Their general characteristics are the same, the themes are similar to Rajasthan works and hence only their locations are enumerated. However, it has to be mentioned that they exhibit a greater 'folk' element than their Southern counterpart.

Kangra District :-

Nurpur (Thakurdvara), Nadaun (Pattanwala Mandit), Sujanpur Tira (Gaurishankar, Murali Manohar and Narmadeshwara temples) Damtal (a Math), Dharamsal (a math and two other buildings etc.), Dadasiba (Radha Krishna temple).

Simla :-

Shogi (Gopal Mandir).

Gurdaspur :-

Pindoridarbar. Baba Maheshdar Ki Samadhi, Dera Baba Nanak, Kalanaul Masjid.

Kulu :-

Sultanpur Palace.

Chamka :-

In Chamka there are two cent centers of wall painting, one is Devi ri Kothi and Rangmahal.

Mandi :-

Mian Bhag Singh Mansion.

Patiala :-

Moti Mahal Palace.

Amritsar :-

Golden temple.

The technique employed in these murals are similar to those of Rajasthani murals. The themes depicted in the murals of the places mentioned above are mostly mythological like, Krishnalila, Scenes from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Ganesh, Dashavataras of Vishnu, Mahishasur Mardini etc., Beside these some secular themes which include Royal figures playing the game of Chausar, lovers, battle scenes, Todi Ragini, Nayikas, Laila and Majnuh, Raja proceeding for shikar etc. also occur.

The above references would indicate albeit rather cursorily, the nature of the themes and techniques of the murals executed in the period immediately preceding the Maratha murals. It was in this Milieu that Maratha are grew.

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SECTION TWO

EXTANT REMAINS.

As yet there is no scientific record of the murals that exist in the area studied in this dissertation. The buildings which contain these are now very old. Many of them are dilapidated, most are in a sad state of repairs. It is doubtful if many of the pieces seen and recorded by the author would remain intact for any length of time. A most precious treasure would be irretrievably lost. No student can do anything to prevent this decay and disintegration. But the next best, viz. verbal and photographic recording of the paintings as data for reconstructing of our cultural history, can and has been done. And since, a study like this one is the most proper place for recording such data, this section contains elaborate descriptions of the murals surveyed and studied by the author. It has increased to some extent the length of the work, but this has been accepted as a necessary evil - if it can be called one.

District Ahmadnagar :-

There were a number of monuments in and around the city of Ahmadnagar built during the times of the Nizamshahi rulers. Most of these are now in ruins. During the Maratha period a number of places like Nevase, Toke etc. acquired a large number of beautiful buildings. But for a few temples in stone, very little now remains. The only place where sizeable remains of murals were discovered was Benawadi.

Benawadi -

Harinarayana Math -

The Harinarayana Math at Benawadi in Ahmednagar district preserves some beautiful paintings in the mandapa adjoining the main shrine.

Swami Harinarayana was a famous saint, who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century. He enjoyed full patronage of Chattrapati Shahu and it is said that the Chattrapati built eleven monastries for his use. Swami Harinarayan died at Benawadi and the monastery under discussion was erected in his memory.

As mentioned earlier this structure preserves murals in the mandapa which measures 7.30 M X 7.30 M. The murals are located on the wall at a height of about 3 M. from the ground and comparatively, therefore, have remained in a good state of preservation.

The mandapa with mural work has arches on all the four sides. The side facing East has an entrance to the main shrine. The murals exist on the wall surface above the entrance arches, but enclosed by the larger wall-arches. Along with this the octogone that forms the drum of the dome, the squinches and the dome-shaped ceiling also bear mural work. The murals depict mythological subjects and the location of the themes on the walls is as follows.

Wall facing North -

The space above the central arch shows 'Draupadi Swayamvara', in the centre and surrounding it are figures of various deities like Panchamukhi Mahadeva, Vishnu, Bramhadeva, Rampanchayatana (partly damaged) and also saints like Vyasa. In the squinches, figures of Sadhus appear.

Wall facing East -

In the space above the central arch a partly damaged depiction of the 'Gopivastraharana' could be identified. Except a picture which exists on the right hand side of the central piece and in which figures of a king, a sadhu and an attendant appear, rest of the pictures are washed out. The sadhu appearing in the above mentioned mural is perhaps Harinarayana Swami, who wears a long 'Kafani' and has a veena in his hand.

Wall facing South -

In the central picture there appears a deity who is shown seated on a seat which looks like Shivalinga. He holds an arrow or sword in his hand. On his head he wears a karanda mukuta and has a beard. On either side of the deity a goddess and a number of attendants appear. One of the attendants holds a chhatra while the other is with an abadagira. A figure of a bird also could be noticed in

the picture and if it is a peacock, the deity depicted in this picture could be identified as 'Kartikēya'. In the remaining space of this side are shown varaha, vamaṇa, Paṛashurama, Buddha and Kalki. In the space of the squinches figures of sadhu are shown.

Wall facing West -

The Dashavatara theme is continued on this wall and there appear figures of Kurma and Matsya. The central space, (that is above the central arch) shows Gaṇapati. On his right hand side there appears Sarasvatī seated on a peacock, while on the left hand side is seen 'Kamalasana' Lakshmi. Mahishasurmardini appears in the space on the right hand side. The squinches display figures of asetics. The ceiling is decorated with concentric bands of the floral motifs.

These murals are done in the fresco technique. The colourwork has a white background and the surviving colours are crimson red, yellow ochre and black. Outlines are done in black while some shading with gray colour could be noticed on the figures.

The figures are heavy and have deep curves in the body. Their actions and postures are tense.

The male figures of the deities have traditional

costumes. They have karandaka mukuta, while some of the minor figures wear angarkha, chudidar, dupatta and pagadis of Peshwai and Rajasthani types.

Female figures wear Maharashtrian sadi and choli, while a few figures are dressed in North Indian costume. The pattern of stripes and dots on the cloths are noteworthy as it was current in the South India during the Mayaka period.

District Belgaum :-

This district has a large number of historical monuments. However the only noteworthy structure of the Maratha period that is now in a fairly good state of preservation is the palatial mansion of the Desais of Nipani. Although the murals in this palace represent the very last expressions of Maratha art, their quality makes it imperative that they should be discussed in some detail.

Nipani -

The fortified palace of the Desai family at Nipani is one of the prominent palaces of the Maratha period and along with other characteristic features of contemporary architecture, it is ^{to be} noted for the mural decoration which exists on its walls. The construction work of this palace was commenced by Sidhojirao Nipankar, the founder of the royal house of Nipani, in 1793 A.D. and it continued with certain breaks upto the 1839 A.D. The mural work of the palace thus belongs to the first half of the nineteenth century.

Today murals exist on the walls of the darbar hall and on the walls of a small room, supposed to be the bedroom of the owner. The flaking of the plain lime wash which was applied on the walls of several rooms at a later date reveals the remains of the murals that once covered these walls. It shows that a good deal of mural painting existed in the palace, besides the work in the portions mentioned above.

Sidhojirao Nipankar was a devotee of lord Krishna and hence Krishnalila is the theme which is mainly depicted in the murals. However, the paintings executed in the darbar hall and those in the bed chamber seem to be executed by different artists as a stylistic difference which is clearly discernible.

Darbar Hall -

The darbar-hall of the upper storey is quite spacious, measuring 16 M X 12 M. It faces East and is open from the Eastern side. The wall which faces East and has the entrance to the darbar-hall, bears paintings.

This wall is divided into nine sections by pillars. Out of these two enclose one door each. The remaining seven sections display elaborate alcoves. The rectangular space of each section is enclosed by an arch, in relief. Within it small niches of various sizes ^{are} carved. There are eight of these. Six wall sections bear murals. The themes appear in the following order.

Section No.1.

The central rectangular frame shows Bakasuravadha and the small sections surrounding this frame have a Brahmin reading some holy scripture, Radha and Krishna, a Brahmin worshipping Shivalinga, again Radha-Krishna.

Section No.2.

The central frame shows Krishna-Janma. Smaller frames have, seated Radha-Krishna, Musicians, some unidentified deity and floral decorative motif.

Section No.3.

In the central frame Krishnaleela theme appears

while the other frames show females holding arati tray, Vishnu and floral motifs.

Section No. 4.

The main theme of this section is Krishna's departure for Mathura. The frame above this one shows seated Lakshami and on either side are, frames depicting a priest and Krishna doing hair of Radha and Krishna with Radha.

Section No. 5.

The theme of Mahishasurmardini appears in the central frame. Other frames show female figures of attendants and floral motifs.

Section No. 6.

In the centre some seated deity is depicted. The rectangular frame on the left shows Shiva-Parvati, while the frame on the right depicts Lakshami-Narayana and Garuda. Other frames shows floral decorative motifs.

Each section measures approximately 1.40 M. X 1.40 M. and the frames inside the sections measure 55 cms. X 40 cms. From these measurements of the frames it is quite clear that the paintings are miniature in size. These miniatures on the wall are executed on a plastered surface,

with water colours. Outlines are done in black and red and other surviving colours are crimson, vermillion, yellow ochre, deep green. Ultramarine blue is also present but is faded while the green has turned almost black.

The figures are done in a stylized manner. The forceful curves of the body of the figures and their wide open eyes are noteworthy.

The deities are shown in traditional costumes and they wear a towering crown of South Indian tradition. The Pagadis worn by the male figures (attendants and gaurds) consist of Deccani, Peshwai and Rajasthani variety. There is an attempt to show diaphanous clothes . Females are clad in sadi and choli.

The Bed Chamber -

From the painted darbar-hall of the upperstorey one has to take a turn on the left to the interior verandah which encloses the courtyard. After crossing this verandah again there is a long verandah on the right. Almost at the end of this verandah there is a door on the left to yet another verandah, which has 'Rangmahal' apartment on the right hand side. This room has the entrance facing East and except a small window there is no other source of light to the room. Consequently the room is dimly lit. The 'Rangmahal' is fairly small,

measuring 5 M x 5 M. and all the four walls of it bear murals. Besides these one painting exists on the outer side of one of the walls, the wall facing East and through which entrance to the room is obtained.

As usual the upper portion of the walls was treated as the surface for painting and the lower portion covered with a wash of red. The portion which is used for the painting is enframed within borders of floral motifs. This space is divided into rectangular panels. The larger panels normally measure 1.40 M X 1 M. and the smaller ones measure 45 cms X 1 M. The larger frames display one theme each while the smaller frames are mostly divided into more than one part and display more than one subjects.

Themes -

As mentioned earlier all the painting depict Krishnaleela topics only.

Wall facing East (outer wall) -

This wall bears only one painting on the left hand side. The painting depicts Draupadi Swayamvara.

Out of four walls of the interior, the wall facing East is badly damaged and the themes painted over it have almost disappeared. Rest of the three walls display beautiful paintings.

Wall facing West -

The main picture of this wall depicts Krishnaleela theme. This painting measures 1.40 M X 1 M. Smaller frames of this wall also depict Radha and Krishna seated together in a garden, playing chausar.

Wall facing North -

This wall shows two large picture frames measuring 1.40 M X 1 M along with smaller frames. One picture shows ' Krishna-tula ' while the picture on the right hand side depicts ' Ranga-panchami '. Smaller frames depict Krishna embracing and kissing Radha.

Wall facing South -

The smaller frames on this wall depict Radha and Krishna in various tender moods ^{and acts} viz. Radha and Krishna on a swing with a group of Gopis around them, Krishna holding the hand of Radha, Radha offering something in a cup to Krishna who is seated on a chair, Krishna embracing Radha, Krishna kissing her, Krishna trying to uncover the face that Radha is trying to cover with pallav of her sadi. On the right hand side a large guldasta appears.

The events are depicted against a large but elaborate architectural background. All the buildings are

either of the contemporary Rajasthani or Maratha style. There is a very narrow stripe for the sky above them and an attempt is made to intersperse some trees in between. In the foreground patterned gardens with ponds and fountains in between are to be seen.

The male figures are in traditional as well as contemporary type of costume. All female figures are in the Maratha sadi-choli garment.

The pictures are remarkable for the great variety of postures, the extremely delicate but beautiful faces and the supple curvacious figures.

District Kolhapur :-

Kolhapur was the capital of the junior branch of the Chhatrapatis. There are a large number of jagirs which have got more or less pretentious structures. Out of these it was possible to survey only one namely the mansion of the Pant- Pratinidhis at Malkapur.

K O L H A P U R :-

Malkapur -

Pant Pratinidhi Wada :-

The palatial mansion of the Pant Pratinidhis, at Malkapur preserves some mural work. The murals seem to be of a late date. They are located on the outer side of the wooden partition of the Devgriha. The Painted area measures 2 m X 1.50 m. and is distributed into rectangles and squares, in which different themes are executed. Leaving aside the figure of some royal figures dressed in the contemporary costume, all the themes come from mythology. The subject matter includes following themes :

Ramapanchayatana, Krishna-gopis, Seshashai Vishnu, Shiva's family, Mahishasurmardini, figures of Saints from mythological literature, Ten incarnations of Vishnu, Jay and Vijay. Beside these all the nine grihas (गृह) are found depicted here riding on their respective vehicles (वाहन).

The female figures of these murals wear Maharashtrian sadi while the male figures wear dhoti, uttariya and a crown. Sadhus wear Jata Mukuta. It is interesting to note that the paintings are done in oil colours, although their style remains traditional. As usual the paintings are executed against a red background

with yellow, blue, green, white and black. The colours have faded and thus lost their original effect. The outlines are done in red and black. The workmanship of these painting is poor.



District Nasik :-

Nasik city and district were never politically quite important. However it was an important religious and cultural centre and as such almost all important personalities had their houses and temples in this city. In addition the district was fortunate in having places like Chandwad within its jurisdiction. All the places in this district have preserved good examples of wood carving and the extant remains of murals speak of very high artistic taste.

Chandori -

Chandori at a distance of 20 Km. from Nasik in the district of that name is at present a small and simple village but in the eighteenth century it was the seat of the historical Hingane family. The illustrious members of this family were the ambassadors of the Peshwas to the Delhi Court and earned a name for themselves in the diplomatic field. The fame and wealth of this family declined in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Still the place preserves survivals typical of the Maratha period and some of its structures preserve murals of contemporary period.

Balaji Mandir -

The small rectangular, outer mandapa of the Balaji temple is open from the Southern side. The remaining three walls of the mandapa possess traces of mural work. The colour work of this place has become faint on account of a film of a D.D.T. spray, however, some of the themes could be recognised. The subject matter of these murals is mythological. The themes occur on the walls in the following order.

Wall facing East -

Themes depicted on this wall are enclosed within a large painted arch. From this wall the theme Kalanki -

avatara and a guldasta motif could be identified.

Wall facing South -

This wall has been divided into four parts with the help of wooden pillasters. In each section there is a door. In the space around it, enclosed by a painted arch are painted a number of themes.

First Part - A devotee, Vitthal and Rakhumai (standing on the bricks), Garuda, Kamsa Vadha.

Second part - Rama-Ravana Yuddha. In the lower portion a motif of deer on either side of the door.

Third Part - Parushurama, Vamana, Ganapati and Surya. On either side of the door figure of dwarapala.

Fourth Part - Narsimha, on either side of the door a guldasta.

Wall facing West -

Shankhasur-vadha, in the lower portion of the wall a guldasta.

The pictures are large sized and done on a common background of a plain wash of red. Besides this ~~The~~ other colours¹⁵ surviving are yellow ochre. The figures are thickest and short. The male figures wear a dress which

consists of a dhoti, an uttariya and an elaborate crown over the head. Some of the figures wear a fully pleated angarakha and dhoti or chudidhar. Female figures wear Sadi and Choli. The general standard of workmanship is not high.

Hingane Palace -

The palatial mansion of the Hingane family was profusely decorated with murals but today except some fragments of floral motifs, a large sized figure of Dattatraya, an outline drawing of Saraswati seated on a peacock and a faint impression of the colour work on the walls, the mural work on the walls is washed out and has disappeared.

A Private House -

On the facade of a double storeyed mansion there survive two pictures. These pictures are located on either end of the upper wall surface. The picture on the left side shows Krishna embracing Radha. The picture on the other end is a representation of Mahishasur-mardini. (This painting is badly damaged.)

The pictures are large-sized and composed in a frame work of an arch, inside a rectangular frame. The colours of the pictures are washed out leaving black outlines and some patches of red. The figures are of simplified and vigorous.

Vitthal - Rakhumai Mandir -

In this temple also the murals exist on the walls of the outer veranda or mandapa. This veranda is open from the eastern side and the murals are to be found on the walls facing South, East and North. However, these paintings were also profusely sprayed with D.D.T. hence some of the pictures could not be identified. The walls facing South and North of the same size and are rectangular. The upper half of the wall is treated as the surface for the painting. The wall facing East has a door in the centre and a window on either side of it. The whole upper space of the wall is utilized for the painting.

Wall facing East -

(1) Kalanki-avatara and (2) Buddha-avatara.

Wall facing East -

(1) Mahishasur-mardini, (2) Kamsa-vadha, (3) Lakshmi, (4) Rama-Ravana yuddha, (5) Ganapati, (6) Parusharama-avatara, (7) Vamana-avatara, (8) Narsimha-avatara. (9) Vali and Sughariva, (10) Varaha-avatara.

Wall facing North -

(1) Kurmavatara, (2) Krishna and Gopis.

The murals are fairly large in size and executed

on a common background of red within a spacious frame. Other colours used in these murals are white, yellow, ochre, and black. The background is plain with no objects that could serve as a setting for the event. The figures are bold and have curves of the body. Male figures are dressed according to traditional costume of deities and having a heavy bejewelled crown over the head. Female figures are dressed in sadi and choli.

Chandwad -

Malharrao Holkar was one of the prominent Maratha Sardars who expanded Maratha Kingdom in the region of Malwa and North India at the instance of the Peshwa Bajirao first. Indore and Maheshwar were the seats of the Holkar in Malwa, while Chandwad which is situated at a distance of 60 Kms. from Nasik, was the centre of their activity in the Maratha land, ^{at 15} on highway No.3 and ~~it~~ is at present ~~is~~ the headquarter of one of the tehshils of Nasik district.

The palace of the Holkars popularly known as Rang Mahal is a magnificent building. The palace is not only an excellent specimen of Maratha architecture, famous for it's grandeur and marvellous wood carving but also for the beautiful murals of the Maratha period it has preserved.

The date of construction of this palace is not known. But most probably it was built by Malharrao Holkar

within a couple of years after he obtained Chandwad from the Mughals in 1756 A.D. Thus it is more likely that the paintings on it's walls belong to the latter half of the eighteenth century.

It seems that a considerable portion of the building had mural paintings. Colour work peeps out at a number of places from the layers of fresh white wash. At present the darbar-hall of the upper storey contains the most noteworthy work of this palace. Besides this, two adjoining rooms also have colour work. Out of these two small rooms one room contains only floral designs while the other room has murals of a very late date.

Darbar-hall -

The darbar-hall originally measured 26.60 M. X 10.30 M. but at present it is divided by a partition and the left hand portion is used for local courts. The right hand portion is preserved by the Holkar Trust as it contains murals (11.40 M X 10.30 M.) Being neglected for many years the paintings with few exceptions are in a bad state of preservation. The Northern side of the hall is quite open and allows weather to cause damage to the murals. The surface of the wall has become considerably damaged and plaster has peeled out at places. A number of paintings are wantonly scratched and disfigured by mischievous visitors.

At present murals survive only on two of the walls, the wall facing East and the wall facing North and on wooden surface of the arches and on the cornice. Pillars, ceilings are also covered with decorative painting.

The lower portion of the walls is painted red, while the upper portion is utilized for the execution of the paintings.

Wall facing East -

The wall is divided into two parts by a pilaster. Both the parts have two horizontal rows of niches. In all there are eleven niches, five in the left hand portion of the wall and six in the right hand side of it. The wall space inside the niches is treated as the painting surface for some important theme, thus each niche contains some individual theme while the narrow wall space surrounding the niches is utilized for various themes against a common background. The themes are located on the walls as follows.

Left hand Portion -

Niche No.1 - two seated royal figures, No.2- Floral decorations, No.3 - Shiva, No. 4 - Radha and Krishna rowing (naukavihara). No.5 - Picture inside this niche is damaged. In the space surrounding these niches following themes occur - Gajalakshami, Gajendra-moksha, a seated sage, Ganapati, Ahalya-uddhara, Ganapati, Saraswati seated on a

peacock, Vishnu, some warrior and a sage,. Besides these the wall space has gulldastas for the decorative effect.

Right hand Portion -

This part shows on themes according to following manner -

Niche No.1 - Narikunjara, No.2 - Seated Ganapati with four females, No.3 - Beshashai Vishnu. The rest of the three niches are badly damaged. The space surrounding these niches shows following themes - Garuda, Ragini Todi, a warrior figure, Radha and Krishna, Vishnu, Radha-Krishna playing phugadi, Goverdhanoddharana, Samudra-manthan, Matsya-avatara, again Govardhanoddharana, Rama-Panchayatana Lakshmi, Krishna doing the hair of Radha, Krishna, Krishna along with the Gopis, Murlidhara, Krishna, Gopis and Yashoda, Matsya-avatara, Narsimha-avatara, Parushrama-avatara, Kamsa-vadha, Kalki-avatara, Hanumana, Ragini Todi, man with a bird, Radha-Krishna, Vishnu, an attendant with garland.

Wall facing North -

This wall has a door on either ends. As stated earlier, this hall has been divided by a partition. Its left portion is used by the local courts and the right portion is preserved by the Holkar Trust.

The wall portion of the court office shows three themes in three niches. These are- devi on a tiger, standing

figure of Ganapati and Kartikeya on a peacock.

The wall portion preserved by the Holkar Trust display various themes. The area available for painting is divided into four square parts with the help of floral bands. Except the section on the extreme right which has one niche, four rectangular frames and the entrance, all three other parts enclose two niches (one upper niche and one lower niche) and four rectangular frames. The niches measure approximately 40 cms X 50 cms, while the rectangular frames are 90 cms X 30 cms. in size. The themes are located as follow -

Section 1 (extreme left) -

Frame No.1 (rectangular) Krishna-Jamuwant yuddha
No.2 (niche) Adishakti evoked by the god, No.3 (Rectangular) A Sadhu standing in front of a seated Brahmin with Shiva, Vishnu and Narada witnessing the scene, No.4 (Rectangular) Setubandhan, No. 5 Ranga panchami, Krishna with Radha and Gopis, No.6 (Rectangular) badly damaged.

Section 2 -

No.1 (Rectangular) A scene of Vaikuntha, where Lakshmi-Narayan and other divine couples are seated in a palatial building. No.2 (Niche) Meeting of a royal persons
No. 3 (Rectangular) The theme depicted in the upper portion of this frame looks like the meeting of Laila and Majnuh.

However, from the lower portion of this picture which is badly damaged a figure of Garuda could be recognised. No.4 (Rectangular) This painting is also partly damaged. In the upper portion two Brahmins and one seated Sadhu could be seen. No. 5 (Niche) Narsimha-avatara (The face of Narsimha is completely damaged), No. 6 (Rectangular) Danaleela.

Section 3 -

No.1 (Rectangular) in the upper portion sun in a chariot is shown, while the lower portion displays a representation of Kakubha Ragini, No.2 (Niche) Seeta Swayamvara, No.3 (Rectangular) Moon in a chariot drown by the deer. No. 4 (Rectangular) Wrestlers, No. 5 (Niche) Battle of Mahabharata, No. 6 (Rectangular) Kaliya-mardan.

Section 4 -

No.1 (Rectangular) Krishna with Gopis, No. 2 (Niche) Dance performance in a darbar, No. 3 (Rectangular) equestrian royal figure, No. 4 (Rectangular) Gopivastraharana.

On the cornice of the inner section of the hall there is a beautiful procession in which a prince is shown in palanquin accompanied by dignatories on horses, soldiers and attendants on camels in bullock carts and on foot.

On the cornice of the outer (northern) section of the hall is a depiction of the iRamayana. Although the painting is greatly damaged some scenes are clearly visible and enable the identification of the theme.

All these pictures are, what can be called 'miniature' in size. The size of the niches measures approximately 40 cms X 50 cms. or in rare cases 75 cms X 60 cms., while the rectangular frames measure 90 cms X 30 cms. The number of figures appearing in a picture is fairly large, for example, painting which depicts the battlefield of Kurukshetra contains not less than seventy five figures (a majority of them are human figures and the rest are those of elephants, camels and horses). This painting is executed in the space of a niche.

Human figures are forceful but short and have slightly bigger heads. The facial features are quite beautiful and the wide open eye is notable. Figures are shown in different postures ^{and} ~~which~~ all of them are vigorous.

Two types of male attire is to be found in these painting. In the paintings of religious themes the principal figures wear dhoti as the lower garment, an uttariya on the shoulder and around the waist is a waist-band. On their heads are towering crowns. The minor figures even though they belong to religious subject matter and the figures of

secular themes wear a long or short angarkha as the upper garment and chudidar or mandcholarna as the lower garment. They also have a waist-band and on their heads there are pagadis of the Peshwai fashion.

Most of the female figures are shown attired in Maharashtrian dress. These figures cover their heads with the pallav of the sadi. The female figures of Ragamala are dressed in ghagara, choli and dupatta, while dancers wear a long angarkha, chudidar and dupatta.

The figures are heavily bejewelled and the pearls of the ornaments are depicted in quite prominent a manner.

The murals are executed on a mud plaster. The plaster of the wall surface has become very fragile and the colours are flaking, however, a few colours still survive. They are crimson red, vermilion, gamboj, ultramarine blue, dark green, black and white. It seems secondary tones of red, green, blue, yellow were used by mixing white in them, but at present all such shades have turned white. In some of the painting gold still survives. The outline is done in black and it is of two qualities. At some places it is forceful but at a number of places it is carelessly executed resulting in a weak rendering.

Side Room -

The side room containing thematic paintings measures 6.90 M X 4.70 M. and has murals on all of its four walls. The horizontal space of the upper portion of the walls is utilized as the surface for the painting. This horizontal stripe is divided into squares and rectangles and the scenes are depicted inside these frames. The themes are located on the walls in the following manner -

Wall facing East -

(1) Ghatotkachavadha, (2) Shiva or Dattatraya in the battle field. (3) Shiva and his family. (4) Yashoda punishing Krishna. (5) Shiva killing the demon, (6) A royal figure enjoying dance performance along with other courtiers, (7) Govardhanoddharana, (8) Gaj-Lakshmi, (9) Narada.

Wall facing South -

(1) Draupadi-Swayamvara (This scene occupies three frames), (2) Bhima, (3) Shankar and Parvati, (4) Krishna with Gopis.

Wall facing West -

(1) Parashurama, (2) Vamana, (3) Narsimha, (4) Varaha, (5) Buddha, (6) Kalki, (7) Hanumana, (8) Garuda, (9) Musicians.

Wall facing North -

(1) Marriage of Bhima with Hidimba, (2) Two warriors toching the feet of their mother, (3) Brihannafa and Uttara in the battle field, (4) three demonic figures, (5) A marriage scene, (6) Demon figures, (7) Lakshmi-Narayan, (8) Two seated male figures.

These murals seem to be executed at a very late date and are crude. The background of the murals is white and has a few items of setting like some trees or the frill of a pavilian. As these paintings seem to be quite late their colours are also fresh. The colours are bright red, emerald green, bright yellow. Outlines are done in black.

Nasik -

Being a famous pilgrimage centre and a prominent centre of learning for hundreds of years, the town contains a large number of buildings constructed by Maratha dignataries and affluent gentlemen. The fragments of the plaster surviving on the walls of several buildings either display faint remains of colourwork or exhibit motifs like guldasta, floral designs, birds, elephants etc. This fact makes it quite evident that there existed extensive mural work in the town which has disappeared due to some reason or other. However, on the facades of Shringeri Math and Bhadrakali temple some themetic paintings still survive and

give us an idea about the mural work of this place.

Unfortunately these murals are in a bad state of preservation and would not survive for a long time as they are quite exposed to the effects of natural elements. Since they are executed at a considerable height they have been saved from human vandalism.

Bhadrakali Temple -

The Bhadrakali temple in ' Tibandha ' or the cross, was built by Ganpatrao Dikshit Patwardhan in 1790. The shrine faces West and on it a fragment of painting still exists. This fragment is divided into six sections. The two arched panels in the middle (one upper and one lower) represent iconographic figures of Mahishasurmardini and Ganapati. Remaining four arched panels display decorative guldastas. The background colour of this work is red. Besides this only black and white are the colours which survived.

Shringeri Jagatguru Shankracharya Math -

A large two storied building a few meters from the river Godavari at Nasik is known as 'Shankracharya Math'. This structure is said to have been built by Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao in 1774 A.D. The rest house in front was built by Nana Phadnavis and the monastery by one Naro Shankara (1950). Thus the murals on the facade of this

building belong to late eighteenth century. The paintings are located on outer side of the wall surface of the upper storey. There is a row of windows and the space which surrounding the windows and the space at either end of the wall is utilized for painting. Thus the wall has been divided into five panels in all, out of which four panels enclose a window each. In these rectangular panels the paintings are enclosed by a painted arch. The paintings have become so faint that it is difficult to identify all the motifs executed. However, some of them could be recognised. They are as follow)- Gopivastraharana, Mahishasurmardini, Krishna embracing Radha. Besides these religious themes a few popular secular motifs are also present on the walls. These are- a royal figure proceeding fast on a horse for hunting expedition with the hounds running along with the horse, a seated figure dressed according to contemporary fashion, a wrestling bout. Some bird motifs are also there to fill the empty space.

Within the arch the motifs are executed on a common background which is painted red. Over this red background only black and white survive.

Sayakheda -

At Sayakheda in the Nasik district, some mural work exists in a temple. This mural work belongs to a very

late age and is not of a very high quality.

The themes executed on the outer walls of the temple are, Dashavatara, family of Shiva, Rama Panahcyatana, Sheshshai Vishnu, Krishna fluting, Krishna engaged in phugadi with Radha and some British soldiers.

The colours of the paintings have faded considerably leaving some survivals of Blue, green, yellow, black, red and white. The outlines are done in black. Female figures wear dress of Maharashtrian fashion.

District Pune :-

Pune was the headquarters of Maratha power right from its inception. Historical records speak of a large number of forts, temples and houses built during the Maratha period. These records also testify to the high artistic quality of all these. The decline and fall of Maratha power inevitably laid to the disintegration of most of these monuments. Today we get only a faint glimpse of the splendour of this great political and cultural centre.

Morgaon -

Mayureshwar Mandir -

The temple of Mayureshwar or Moreshwar at Morgaon contains mural work of the Maratha period. The place is situated on the banks of Karha river and is some 70 Km. from Pune. Mayureshwara is one of the eight Vinayakas and is given priority in the order of their worship by tradition. The place is also considered to be an ancient seat of Ganapatya Sect.

The temple is said to have been built by a famous Ganapatya saint, Moroba Gosavi, sometime during the 14th century. Originally the temple was quite small. It was renovated by one Moreshwar Gole at the instance of Swami Ganesh Yogindra in the eighteenth century. The latter construction consists of a mandapa in front of the main shrine, a fortified wall enclosing a large courtyard around the main temple and the dipamalas.

This Ganesha Yogindra was a famous Ganapatya saint. He was a great devotee of the Moreshwar and worked hard to popularise the deity in several ways. He made a good collection of literature of Ganapatya sect and himself compiled and wrote commentry on the Mudgal-Purana. He was also a good artist and the paintings in the Morgaon temple are said to be his handiwork.

These are to be seen in one of the cells on the righthand side verandah. The reason for the existence of murals, in such a small cell is perhaps that this cell was used by Ganesha Yogindra for his daily meditation. Unfortunately the walls and the ceiling of the cell were given a lime wash and a coat of colour sometime during the early part of the present century. It was only after removing these layers that the paintings could be seen. The cell under study faces South (the Southern side is quite open). There is an idol of Ganesha in the wall facing the entrance to the cell. On either side of the idol a figure of dwarapala is shown. The main mural work is to be found on the walls on either side (walls facing West and East). The arrangement of the themes on the wall surface is quite simple. As usual the lower portion of the wall remains plain. The upper surface is divided into horizontal panels. Each panel measures 20 cms. in height and in these rectangular panels themes are executed. The entire space of the ceiling is utilized for the painting. The space in the centre is occupied by a rosette while rows of figures are arranged around it in concentric circular bands.

Themes -

Unlike the subject-matter of most of the Maratha murals where a set pattern of themes which normally include

Krishnalila, the Dashavataras, seems from Ramayana and the Mahabharata etc. along with a few popular episodes of secular nature. The murals under discussion display only one single theme that of ' Ganeshlila '. If these paintings were executed by Ganesha yogindra or by some artist hired by him it is quite natural that the subject-matter confines itself to the episodes in ' Mudgal Purana', which was the most sacred text for him. The subject-matter is dedicated to display the greatness of the god by showing all the other deities supplicating before him. It is thus actually based on a single episode from the ' Mudgal Purana'. In the Purana there appears a story of the demon king Sindhu, who ruled the city of mitihila . He became extremely powerful and tyronical. He conquered all the three worlds and imprisoned the gods including, Bramha, Vishnu, Chandra, Surya and Varuna. On the advice of Brihaspati, all gods evoked Ganapati for their rescue. Pleased with their devotion Ganapati, seated on a golden peacock, fought the demon Sindhu and killed him. He also killed Kamalasura the general of Sindhu's army who was assigned the task of arresting Shiva. After this event all the gods and persons of different sects including the Ganapatyas, Vaishnavas, Shanktas, Shaivas etc. got together to commemorate the victory of Ganapati. The episode given above can be said to be the main theme of these murals. In one of the pictures on the wall facing South, Ganapati is shown riding on a

peacock cutting off the head of the demon Sindhu as also that of Kamalasura. In rest of the other pictures the deity is depicted revered by different gods and a number of female devotees, seated or standing in front of him with folded hands. Even Shiva and Parvati are also present among the worshippers. They include Bramha, Vishnu, Lakshami and Hanumana. The painting on the ceiling show saints reading holy scriptures and some king listening to them. A few figures of Ganapati seated or standing with his consorts also occur.

9 The murals are done in fresco technique. Colours are laid flat. Traces of yellow ochre, terravertta, white and black survive. Black colour used for the line work could also be noted at places. The outlines of these murals are quite bold. It seems that the outlines were inscribed on the surface, when the plaster was wet. These inscribed lines are filled with black, after the plaster became dry.

In most of the pictures the deity Ganapati is placed in either left or right half of the register and rest of the place is occupied by other figures, arranged in a row in front of Ganapati.

Human figures of these murals are quite proportionate in their physical features. However the heads are slightly bigger than the rest of the body. The facial

features are bold. Execution of the palms and feet is quite slipshod. The figures lack variety of postures. Most of the human figures male as well as female are shown standing or seated with folded hands in front of Ganapati.

The male deities are shown wearing a dhoti as the lower garment, they have a dupatta around the waist and a crown over the head. Human figures wear dhoti, a short stiff angarkha and a waist band of dupatta. The angarkhas are patterned with dots on their heads, they wear Peshwai pagadi. The figures of dwarpalas are elaborately dressed as they wear a fully pleated angarkha reaching down the toes, chudidhar and a waist band around the waist. The dupatta or shash is quite decorative with floral patterns on its ends. In the folds of dupatta these figures keep a dagger which has ornamental parrot motif on the top. The turbans of the dwarpalas are loosely wound, decorated with brocades. Females are shown wearing sari and choli in the Maharashtrian fashion and cover their heads with pallav of the sari.

Both male and female figures are richly bejewelled.

Pandeshwara -

Pandeshwara Mahadeva -

A fairly large number of murals is to be found in the Shiva temple of Pandeshwara. This temple is situated on

the banks of the river Karha. Pandeshwara is at a distance of some 8 Km. from Morgaon in Poona District. The place is considered to be sacred. While Morgaon is believed to be the Kashi of the South, Pandeshwara is considered to be the Gaya of South. The temple was erected sometime during the reign of Yadava dynasty. Except the beautiful outer mandapa nothing remains of the early structure of the temple. Around 1710 to 1720 A.D. a person from the Atre family renovated the temple. He reconstructed the garbha-griha, added an inner mandapa to the main Shrine, a Nandi temple and a octagonal row of cells to form a verandah enclosing the temple from all sides.

The mural work was executed probably just after the renovation, that is, in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The murals of this temple were obscured by layers of white wash and spray of D.D.T. The pictures are also disfigured by the visitors. The leakage in the ceilings has also damaged some of the pictures. The pictures have been studied here after cleaning them chemically.

The latter structures of this temple, that is the garbha-griha, the mandapa adjoining the garbha-griha, Nandi temple and verandah contain mural work.

The paintings executed in different apartments of

the temple seem to belong to different dates, as the paintings in different structures differ in stylistic details from each other.

Main Shrine and adjoining Mandapa -

The main temple faces East. In the garbha-griha, murals are to be seen on the walls, on the ceiling and on the beams. The pictures have become so faint that only one of the themes, that is the one executed on the wall facing East could be identified. This large-sized mural depicts Shiva with his family. On the ceiling and the beams some floral decorative patterns are to be seen.

In the mandapa on the either side of the entrance to the garbha-griha a figure of a dwarapala is shown. The main work thus exists on the walls facing North and South. The horizontal upper space of these walls is divided into several panels with a mihrab top frame surrounding each. In these frames one or two, at the most three figures are shown against a plain red background.

Themes -

Wall facing South -

The condition of the murals of this wall is not good but still some of the avataras such as Vishnu, Matsya Kurma, Varaha, Narsimha, Rama and Krishna could be identified.

This wall displays a few secular motifs like a standing couple, a king rinding an elephant, and two worriors fighting with their swords in hand.

These murals are painted on a lime plastered surface with the colour pallet consisting of vermilion red, crimson, deep green, gamboj yellow and white, outlines being in black.

The figures are large in size. Both the human as well as animal figures are clumsy.

Nandi Mandapa -

This small structure measuring 5.15 M X 5.15 M. has four entrances from all the four sides and the idol of Nandi is placed in the centre. The ceiling and upper space of the wall on either side of each entrance is utilized for the painting. The walls facing West and East display themetic motifs. The ceiling is painted with diaper pattern.

Wall facing West -

The frame in the upper left of the wall shows iconic representation of Vishnu and on ~~his~~ either of his sides are the figures of Hanumana and Garuda. The lower frame, a niche of this size, shows a guldasta. In the right the upper frame is Shiva riding Nandi while the lower frame has a guldasta.

Wall facing East -

The frame of the upper left of this wall shows a seated couple while the lower frame has a guldasta. The upper-right frame of the wall represents ragini todi and in the lower frame is a guldasta.

This work in the Nandi temple is done in the fresco technique and the colours used are red (geru), yellow ochre, terraverta green and white. Outlines are in black. The figures are weak and unimpressive.

Verandah -

In the verandah except the first five cells, the entire wall surface contains colour work though a major part of the work executed here is in a very bad state of preservation and only some of the themes depicted on the walls could be identified. The murals are executed on the upper portion of the walls, on the ceiling surface and in the squinches. The ceiling is painted with diaper patterns while in the squinches occur big figures of seated sadhus are

On the drum of the dome floral designs occur while the main themes are shown in the upper half of the wall within an arched frame.

Although these murals mainly depict mythological themes secular themes are not altogether absent. Following

themes could be identified. Gopivastaraharana, battle-scene, Ramapanchayatana, Kaliyamardana, a royal couple playing the game of chausar, Prince Uttar and Brihannada in the battle field, Rasalila, Hanuman taking Dronagiri, hunting - expeditions, drink parties, dance performances in a darbar, meeting of two royal persons. A royal figure carried in a palanquin is noteworthy on account of its resemblance with the known portraits of Chhatrapati Shahu.

These murals are also executed in the fresco technique and the colours used are yellow ochre, Indian red (geru) terravertta green and white. Outlines are done in black. Normally each frame contains more than one theme, usually not related to each other. They have a common background of red. As these pictures do not have any background items, the empty space is filled with decorative motifs of birds and flower sprays.

The drawing of human figures is clumsy. Their faces are expressionless with unusually long noses, tight lips and big staring eyes. These elongated figures display awkward postures.

Costume -

The costumes worn by the figures of the murals in the apartments (garbha-griha, mandapa, Nandi temple and verandah) are almost the same. Deities are shown with

a dhoti and a dupatta. On their heads they wear crowns. There are two types of crowns noticed. The most common type in these murals is the three pointed one, so common to late medieval miniatures. The second variety is that of a towering crown, a sort of Karanda-mukuta.

The costume of the male figures of secular themes consist of a long fully pleated angarkha, a narrow waist-band or shash and chudidhar payjama. Over their heads they wear a turban which seems to be long to the Ahmadnagar variety. The angarkhas are patterned with zigzag vertical lines.

Female figures are usually dressed in a ghagra, choli and an odhani. The skirts are patterned with check, cross and zigzag designs. In the picture which shows a Rasalila theme the gopis are dressed in sadi and choli.

Both the male and female figures are heavily bejewelled.

Among the utensils occurring in these pictures are wine jars and cups. A Hukkah also occurs.

Mural painting in a temple at Khadaki -

In the circular ceiling of the temple the painting work is executed in the circular panels. In all there are six panels. The first ^{and second} panels show Krishna-lila themes. The

third panel depicts Ram pachayatan, while the fourth one displays Draupadi Swayamwar, and the fifth one has yashita while the sixth panel could not be recognised.

Pashan -

Someshwara Mandir -

The temple of Someshwara at the village of Pashan some 8 Km. from Pune is one of the few temples that contain mural work of the Maratha period.

The temple is dedicated to god Shiva and was constructed by Yesubai, mother of Chhatrapati Shahu sometime during 1719 to 1730 A.D. In 1780 one Shivarama Bhahu added two mandapas and perhaps the enclosing verandah, a dipamala and a ghat.

The outer of the two mandapas adjoining the main temple contains the mural work. Besides this some fragments of designs also survive in the cloisters and the gate way to the ghat, behind the temple.

As mentioned above the mandapa and verandah form the latter construction, the murals executed in them thus could be attributed to a period after 1780 A.D. which is the date of latter construction. Most probably the murals were executed, within a year or two after completion of the latter structures. The mandapa with the mural work has four

arches on its four sides. The mural work exists on the wall surface above the arches, on the octogane that forms the drum of the dome, in the squinches and on the dome shaped ceiling.

Themes -

The upper surface of the walls enclosed by the arch bears depictions of one theme each. Thus the panel facing North show Draupadi Swayanvara. In the arch facing East Shiva Parvati are shown playing Chousar. In this frame itself there appears Sheshshai Vishnu and also some scenes of Krishnaleela. The arch facing South depicts a battle-scene, while the arch facing West depicts 'Samudra-manthana'.

On the drum of the dome the following themes are depicted in that order. The pictures on the side facing East are in a better state of preservation. They are Saraswati on a peacock, Seated Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi on either side, Gaj-Lakshmi, Radha-Krishna and a group of gopis around the Couple, Buddha, Kalki, Ramapanchayatan, the meeting of Laila and Majnuh, Parushrama, Vaman. In the small squinches some animal motifs and hunting scenes are introduced while the large squinches show figures of Sadhus and flower vases. The ceiling has beautiful design work consisting of concentric

bands on which rows of flowers, leaves, birds, animals etc. are painted. Along with these motifs a few bird motifs appear as space fillers. Among such motifs, hawk attacking a crane, a peacock dancing with his female counterpart are noteworthy.

The murals are done in the fresco technique and the colours used are crimson red, terravertta yellow ochre, white and black. The whole mural work is executed against a crimson background. Some of the scenes like Parushrama, meeting of Laila and Majnuh etc. have a background of forests in which trees, rivers and bird appear. But most of the pictures have a plain background.

Human figures are stylized. They lack freedom of movement and action. However, facial features of some of the figures are carefully done.

The number of animal and bird figures is quite large here, they are - elephants, horses, camels, deer, tigers, rabbits, dogs, cows, bulls, bufellows, serpents, crane, parrot, peacocks, hawks.

In the pictures of religious themes the figures are mostly attired in dhoti, uttariya and a crown over the head. Minor figures in the religious episodes and all figures in the secular scenes wear a long angarkha or a short coat as the upper garment, tight fitting payjama

or 'mandcholana' or chudidhar they have as the lower garment. Along with these they tie a waist-band or dupatta. The Pagadis appearing here seems to be derived from Deccani turbans.

Female figures are attired in Sadi and choli⁴ of Maharashtrian fashion. Both the male and female figures wear ample of jewellery.

Pune —

Baramatkar Wada -

On the facade of a double storeyed mansion of the maratha period in the Rameshwar chowk of the Shukrawar Peth, some mural work survives. Originally it was built by Babuji Naik Baramatkar in the first half of the 18th century . Babuji Naik Baramatkar was not only a prominent dignitary but he was also related to the Peshwas. At present this mansion is in the possession of the Gulujkar family.

Since the mural work is quite exposed to the effects of sun and rain the colours are faded off.

The murals exist on the facade wall of the second storey of the mansion. The horizontal space of the wall surface has a number of windows in a row. These windows are enclosed with the painted arches and the wall surface surrounding the windows is treated as the surface for the painting.

Themes -

The murals depict only religious themes consisting of Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, Krishna and Radha engrossed in Hori, Rama and Seeta, Seated on a throne with Hanumana in front, Kaliyamardan, Mahishasuramardini, single figures of Hanumana, Garuda and dwarapalas. Along with these floral and geometric motifs, flower sprays and bird motifs appear as the space fillers.

Within one arch frames different themes appear on a common background which is painted in red. Themes like Rama-Seeta, Seated Ganapati, Rangapanchami, Kaliyamardan occupy the central place that is the wall space just above the window. However there is no consideration regarding the relative proportions between bird motifs, flowersprays and of the human figures.

Human figures are done in the perfunctory manner and they are crude. All the figures are in profile.

As mentioned earlier the colours are faded and only red, white and some black survive.

The costume of the main deities consisting of a dhoti and an uttariya. They wear a crown over their heads. Hanumana and Garuda wear shorts, uttariya, a waist band and crown over their heads. Dwarapalas are attired in a gherdar, toe touching angarkha, chudidhar, a waist-band around

the waist and a loosely wound type of Pagadi over their heads. A spear like weapon could be noticed in their hands. The only figure of a soldier is dressed in a short coat or angarkha mandcholana. He wears a Pagadi over the head.

Female figures wear sadi and choli. Both the male and female figures have ample of jewellery over their bodies.

Belbag Mandir -

The temple of Lakshmi-Narayan in Budhwar Peth at Pune, popularly known as Belbag Mandir was constructed by Nana Phadnavis between 1765 to 1769 A.D.

This beautiful temple surrounded by a garden was considered to be one of the attractions of this city in the past. Besides its various charms the temple also preserves some specimens of contemporary mural work in the mandapa adjoining the garbha-griha. This mandapa measures 4.6 M. X 2.55 M and bears painting on the cornices of all the four walls and on the ceiling. The ceiling has a decoration of diaper pattern while the horizontal concave cornice space displays mythological themes in succession. This painting surface approximately measures ⁴⁶110 cms. in width. On account of their location in the inner portion of the temple these paintings remain protected from being exposed to the harmful effects of the natural elements but at the same

time they also have a film of smoke which is created by the oil lamps which have been lit before the deity. The painted ceiling almost lost its design work on account of the rain water getting inside from the leakage in the ceiling. In spite of all these the fine work of the painting catches the eye of the spectator.

Themes -

The subject matter manifested in these painting is exclusively mythological one and themes are executed on the cornice space in the following order. The temple faces East.

Side facing North -

Bramha, Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, godess Saraswati seated on a peacock.

Side facing East -

Ramapanchayatan, Murlidhar Krishna along with a group of gopis around. Sheshashai Vishnu, godess Lakshmi seated on a lotus, on either side of her one female attendant Kalki-avatara, Goverdhana-dharana.

Side facing South -

Seated Shiva, Shiva with his family, Child Ganapati and Parvati seated on Shiva's lap, facing the god

are Narad and Tumburu while at his rear is the seated figure of Bramha.

Side facing West -

Matsya-avatara (Shankasur-vadha) and in front of the incarnation standing figure of Bramha, Samudra-manthan, Varaha-avatara, Narsimha-avatara, Vaman-avatara and the last picture shows Parusharama-avatara.

The paintings are done on the lime plastered surface and have a thin coat of varnish. The colours used are vermilion red, gamboj yellow, dark green, black and white, while gold is also used profusely.

The figures are arranged on a horizontal plan, in the picture space. In the background thick vegetation appear with trees of different kind. Background space also depicts some small structures of temples. The sky arch is filled with clouds. A river water area appear in the foreground according to the need of the themes. (Samudra-manthan, Sheshashai Vishnu, Krishna fluting on the bank of Jamuna.)

The human figures executed here are elongated the facial features of the figures are done with considerable care. The delineation of the figure is conventional but their also appear an attempt towards realism. All most all the figures are in strict profile.

The male deities are shown wearing dhoti and an uttariya over the shoulder. They wear a heavily bejewelled crown over the head. In the picture which shows, vamana-avatara the king Bali is attired in a dotted angarkha and have a Pagadi on his head which seems to be of Deccani variety. The attendants have a costume which consist of a short coat, shorts or mandcholana and a waist band of dupatta. These figures were Pagadis of Rajasthani, Deccani and Maharashtrian origin.

Mostly female figures wear north Indian costume which consists of ghagara, odhani and choli. But some of the figures and mostly the female attendants are attired in Sadi and Choli of Maharashtrian fashion.

The costumes are patterned with dots and lines in gold. The Jari Pallav and borders of sadis and uttariyas or shasha are made ornamental as a line of pearls is tucked in them.

Kanade Wada -

Some fragments of the mural paintings from Pune are preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay. These come from a mansion that was in the possession of the Konkar family. When the murals were obtained for the museum. They are thus known as 'Konkar-wada murals'.

But the mansion was originally built by Ramchandra Ganesh Kanade, a prominent general of the Peshwas during the second half of the 18th century. This mansion was located in the vicinity of the Shaniwar Palace. Unfortunately the mansion was dismantelled when the New Bridge was constructed.

The smallest fragment from this collection, measures 23 cms X 24 cms. and the largest one measures 92 cms X 60 cms. As the specimens are only fragments nothing about the general layout of the murals in the mansion can be said. However, the fragments show that the pictures were composed on the wall surface in the tray-type horizontal and vertical niches which were enclosed by the decorative frame work of the floral designs, perhaps similar to the Dabhade Wada at Talegaon.

Themes -

The available specimens of the murals depict only religious themes. All the ten incarnations of Vishnu are in a good state of preservation. Besides these , other conventional themes that are depicted include vishnu seated with Lakshmi with Narada, Tumbaru, Garuda and some other devotees around; Vishnu resting on the coil bed of Sheshnaga; Govardhanoddharana; Danaleela, Yashoda with Krishna; A gopi taking milk to the market and Murlidhar Krishna.

The paintings are executed on mud plastered. Mostly red serves as the colour for the background. However, green, blue etc are utilised to indicate landforms or the sky. Other colours appearing in the painting are bright red, pink, deep green, gamboge yellow, ultramarine, white and black.

The figures appear in the centre of the picture. Background mostly shows hills, trees, sky with clouds and elaborate building structures. While in the foreground there appear flowerbeds of different types of flowers and flower sprays.

Human figures appearing in these pictures are short, the faces are full with a receding forehead, a sharp nose and a receding chin. The eyes are big. Under the eye a line is usually drawn to show the roundness of it.

The deities of these pictures wear their conventional dress which consists of dhoti, uttariya and a crown over the head. However Vishnu seated with Lakshmi have a Peshwai Pagadi over his head and wears an angarkha. Subordinate figures were somewhat different types of costumes. The king Sahasrarjuna is shown wearing a fully pleated short angarkha, an uttariya, a waist band of dupatta and mandchholana. Over his head there appears a Peshwai Pagadi. Some other subordinate figures wear shorts or dhoti and have Peshwai Pagadi as the headgear. The

cowheard companions of Krishna wear a black coarse blanket locally known as ghogadi

Females are attired in Sadi and Choli. The dresses of male and female figures are patterned with dots and have broad Jari Pallav.

Both the male and female figures wear ample of jewellery. The crowns of the deities are ornamental.

Nana Wada -

The huge palatial mansion, popularly known as ' Nana Wada ' located in the Budhwar Peth, just rear of the Shaniwar Palace, was constructed by Nana Phadnis as his residence at Pune.

At present this building is occupied by a municipal school but some mural work is still extant on the outer walls of the central hall (diwankhana). It is preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. The murals on the facade of the mansion are almost totally washed out, but portions of the outer wall of the hall facing the inner quadrangle do preserve some specimens and these are taken into consideration here.

The wall which bears painting is divided by pillars into a number of sections, out of these five possess murals in the upper half. Three such sections

enclose a door each and the wall space surrounding the doors is treated as the surface for painting. The murals are enframed with arches in relief within these rectangular sections. The painted area is bordered on both the sides (upper and the lower) with decorative designs.

The themes are executed on the wall surface in the following order.

Section No.1 (From left to right)

This section encloses one door and on either side of the door there is a figure of dwarfpala. The dwarfpala on the left hand side has a beard and moustaches and he holds a sword in his right hand. The second one wears a losely wound turban and shorts and with his both hands holds a rabbit by it's hind legs. In the lower half a representation of the ragini ' Todi' and a lady with child appear.

Section No. 2. -

In this section the Bharata war is depicted.

Section No. 3. -

The space of this section is rectangular, that is, it does not have an arch-frame. (The section encloses a door). The space surrounding the door is utilised for the manifestation of the ten incarnations of Vishnu.

Section No. 4. -

This section again shows a battle scene.

Section No. 5. -

Inside the frame and on either side of the door there is a figure of a dwarapala. Here also both the dwarfpalas hold a sword in their right hand and a rabbit in the left hand. Besides these there is the figure of a lady with her two children.

The murals are executed on lime plaster. The themes are presented against a crimson background and the surviving colours are yellow-ochre, black and white. Outlines are done in black. These murals have a final coating of Varnish, which appears to have been applied at some later date in an attempt to preserve them.

Various themes are executed against a plain background without any item of setting. The figures are slightly crude but extremely vigorous.

The deities are shown wearing their traditional costume which consists of a dhoti, an uttariya and waistband of dupatta. Over their heads they wear crowns. Both the varieties of the crown, that is, the karanda as well as kirita are depicted. The subordinate figures in the themes are shown wearing a long or short angarkha and dhoti or shorts. They tie a waist band of dupatta and their headgears are varied, a Peshwai Pagadi, a Rajasthani turban and a Mughal turban of different varieties. The costumes of

attendants are quite interesting. One of the attendants (Section 5) wears a 'mandcholana' as the lower garment and as the upper garment, has a waist-coat having embroidered borders, frilled collars and frilled short sleeves. His headgear is a losely wound turban. The dress of the other attendant is the same but with a slight difference. The lower garment of this figure comes to knee length. His frilled coat has many pleates while he wears a hat of European fashion. Both the figures wear shoes. The attendants appearing in section No.1 wear shorts and dupatta and Pagadis over their heads. Except one female figure which appear in the vamana-avatara all the females are attired in ghagara, choli and odhani.

The Shaniwar Palace -

The historical, stately residential palace of the Peshwas at Poona is known as the 'Shaniwar Palace'. On the walls of the main gate house of the palace, popularly known as Delhi Darwaja some fragmentary murals still exist which could be described as the only monumental evidence that survives of mural painting in this palace of the Peshwas.

From historical records we learn that this palace possessed mural decoration right from it's completion. The second Peshwa, Bajirao first who built the palace in

1732 A.D. is recorded to have employed expert artists to embellish the walls with mural paintings. The successors of this Peshwa made several additions to and alterations in the palace and murals continued to be an invariable item of interior decoration. Unfortunately the whole palace was burnt down by a great fire in 1827 A.D.. Except the heavy rampart, the strong gatehouse and plinths of the main structure nothing survives. Along with it the murals decorating the spacious halls and chowks of the palace have also disappeared. However, some idea of the mural work can be had from a few indirect sources. The paintings, which existed on the cornice of the 'Ganapati Rang-Mahal' are seen in a contemporary oil painting of the Poona darbar painted by a British artist, Danial. This painting depicts a realistic view of the Ganapati Rang-Mahal, in which the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao is shown seated with other dignitaries of his court. Along with some architectural details like the cypress pillars and arches, the painting also represents the murals on the cornice of the hall (This darbar was held in 1791 A.D.). This Ganapati Rang-Mahal was constructed by the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao in 1755 A.D. Thus the murals appearing in the painting of Danial seem to belong to the latter half of the eighteenth century. Marathi records do not provide vivid descriptions of the palace but they are to be found in the writings of a few European gentlemen who had visited the palace either on some political mission or

otherwise. Sir James Mackintosh, recorder of the Bombay Court paid a visit to the Peshwa in 1805 A.D. In the course of his description of the palace he tells us that the walls all around were painted with scenes from Hindu mythology. Another gentleman, Lt. Col. Fitzclarence visited Poona on 31st Jan. 1918 A.D. Just after the fall of the Peshwa regime. At this time the Shaniwar Palace was occupied by the British and had been turned into a military hospital. According to him.. " The walls of the inner court are miserably daubed with the paintings of Hindu mythology, elephants and horsemen ".

From this it would be clear that mural decoration formed an integral part of the scene of things in the Shaniwar Wada. The fragments on the walls of the gatehouse are part of this very scheme, although they cannot be accepted as representative of the scheme qualitatively.

The entrance gates and the rampart walls were constructed by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. These murals could thus be dated to the latter half of the 18th century; they could not be later than 1818 A.D. when the palace was taken over by the British.

As stated earlier mural work survives only on the walls of the gatehouse of the Delhi Darwaja. From the main entrance one gets entry in the spacious gatehouse but not in the palace. One has to take a turn to the right and

then again to turn to left to face the entrance through which one can go to the palace. Thus the plain wall surface facing both the entrances was available and was utilized for the painting. Some colour work still exists on the other two walls of the gatehouse. But these paintings are badly damaged.

Themes -

On the walls facing both the entrances there are large iconic representations of a seated Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, standing on either side. Ganapati is shown in profile. The family deity of the Peshwas was Ganapati and it is quite obvious that they would have thought it auspicious to have the ' darshana ' of Ganapati right at the time of their departure from the palace or at the time of entry into the palace.

The upper portion of the wall facing North has Ganesha while the lower shows remnants of a few other themes. Similarly the upper portion of the wall facing South is occupied by the representation of Ganapati and the lower portion shows depiction of Sheshashai Vishnu.

81 The strong stone walls coated with lime plaster serve as the carrier for these paintings. The colours of these paintings are faded but enough remains to enable one to make out what the painting represented. Remains of red

(crimson) green (which turned almost all in black) and white could still be persistable on the walls. The colours are laid flat and outlines are done in black. The figures are executed on a plain background, that is, without any setting. The empty space is filled up with the flower sprays and bird motifs. Human figures are in profile with handsome appearance. They look quite impressive too on account of their large size.

The females are attired in Maharashtrian sadi and choli while the deities are shown wearing dhoti, uttariya and dupatta around their waist. They wear a karanda mukuta on their heads. Both the male and female figures are heavily bejewelled.

Talegaon -

Among the numerous palatial mansions erected by Maratha noblemen, is to be counted the huge mansion of Dabhade family at Talegaon, some 32 Km. from Pune. This mansion was built by the famous Maratha general Khanderao Dabhade in the third decade of the 17th century. According to contemporary practice the main hall of this mansion was embellished with mural work. Unfortunately this building is today in ruins but luckily some black and white photographic negatives of the wall-paintings are preserved by Dr. Z.D. Ansari of the Deccan College. He had photographed them in

1957, before the building was totally destroyed. This study of the murals in Dabhade Wada is thus based practically entirely on the photographic collection, provided by Dr. Ansari.

Besides the photographs of this mansion, a small fragment of plaster, which has a figure of Maratha Soldier, now preserved in the museum of the Deccan College. This fragment helps us to know about the surface on which the paintings were executed and it also gives some idea about the colours and size of the mural work.

The murals were executed in the darbar or in the central hall. From a photograph which gives a partial view of the painted wall it could be stated that, as usual, the upper part of the wall was treated as the surface for the execution of the murals. This surface was divided into horizontal and rectangular panels. Thematic pictures were executed in the shallow niches with cusped arches and enclosed in rectangular or horizontal tray-type frames. Borders and panels of floral motives and guldastas were arranged around the picture frames.

Subject-matter -

The photographic collections preserves in all thirteen themes of which eight are secular, the rest being of a mythological character. Following are the themes.

The procession:- The king in a palanquin preceded and followed by a large retinue including elephant-riders, Horsemen, camel riders, trumpeteers, banner bearers and other followers.

Phugadi:- Two female figures engaged in phugadi while their female attendants, dressed in North Indian costume, fan them with fly-wisks. Rose water is also being sprayed on the players.

Meeting:- This scene is perhaps connected with some historical meeting which took place in the pavilion of a palace. In all likelihood this picture gives portraiture of Peshwa Bajirao the first, Ambajirao Purandare and the owner of the palace, Khanderao Dabhade himself.*

Two Royal Figures :- The figures are seated on a carpet with swords in their hands. The figure seated on the left hand side wears a Peshwai Pagadi and seems to be that of Peshwa Bajirao I. The figure which is seated on the right hand side is probably that of Khanderao Dabhade who wears a turban. Dabhade sits behind the Peshwa. These two figures are again repeated in another panel in the same manner and posture but in their hands instead of sword they hold a flower.

Figure Saluting :- The figure attired in a long angarkha and very ornate type of Pagadi saluting, seems to be of an attendant.

* See Chavan K. Portrait of a Maratha chief, BDCR XXXIV-4, 12-16

In the Palace :- View of courtyard of a palace shows the daily routine of the palace life. In front of the palace building some wrestlers are practising their skills. Figures of soldiers are seen standing here and there. From the windows of the palace some royal figures and the figures of persons from the royal household are visible.

A Couple :- In the arch of the building a couple is shown enjoying fireworks. The female figure holds a sparkler in her hand.

Under mythological subjects the following themes appear.

Worship of Ganapati :- In this picture Ganapati is worshipped by some men and women.

Krishna doing hair of Radha :- In the courtyard of a palatial structure is seen Krishna doing the hair of Radha while her sakhi holds up a mirror to her. Several ladies are watching the pair from the windows of the house.

Shrawankumara :- In this picture Shrawankumara is shown taking his parents to the pilgrimage.

Murlidhara Krishna :- Krishna playing his flute under a tree while some male and female figures stand on either side of him. One female is in mughal dress, that is angarkha,

chudidhar and dupatta around the waist.

Procession of Shiva :- In this picture Shiva is shown riding Nandi with his family (Parvati and Ganapati seated on the lap of the god) acompanied by his attendants.

From a close observation of the preserved fragment it can be gathered that the plaster of the wall was prepared with the mixture of cowdung mud and grass. Further the plaster was white washed and used as the surface for the painting. Crimson red, gamboj yellow, Ultramarine, white are the pigments which seem to have been used in these paintings. Outlines are done in black.

The main human figures are executed carefully but the subordinate figures are clumsy and weak. Some of the figures are placed on lotus pedestals. Mostly the figures are arranged in the centre of the picture on a horizontal plan. The upper space show landforms, trees, hills, structures etc. while the lower portion of the painting is mostly occupied by flowerbeds with fountains in between.

Different categories of human figures are represented in these murals. These figures are attired according to their position and categories. The female figures wear Maharashtrian sadi and choli. While the figures of attendants are dressed in a costume which consists of angarkha, chudidhar, waist band of dupatta.

District Satara :-

The district and its headquarter came into prominence only during the later Maratha period. Two remarkable monuments of this period namely the two palaces as Satara, testify to the past glory of the place. Apart from this capital of the later Chhatrapatis it was Wai, a place of great religious importance that boasts of a large number of highly ornate structures of this period.

Menawali -

The village Menawali, a Jagir of the famous politician Nana Phadnavis is situated at a distance of five kilometers from Wai. The entire village was probably inhabited only during the Maratha period and as such there are many structures of that date. Many of these once contained murals. At present mural work is to be found only in two buildings, the palatial mansion of Nana Phadnavis and the temple of Meneshwara. Both constructions seem to belong to the late eighteenth century.

Meneshwara Temple -

On the banks of the river Krishna the temple of Meneshwara is situated. The idol placed in this temple is that of Vishnu, showing that Meneshwara is one of the local names of Vishnu. The village obviously seems to be named after the local deity Meneshwara.

The main building of the temple faces East. At present the colour work is to be found only on the tray shaped ceiling of the mandapa adjoining the garbhagriha. The mandapa measuring 3.64 m x 6.66 m in size displays a diaper pattern on the flat surface of the ceiling against a yellow background with flowers and leaves of red and green, while there are religious motifs on the sloping cornice on all the four sides. In spite of being executed

at the considerable height these paintings are in a bad state of preservation. Due to negligence, the plaster of the painting has become fragile and the colours are flacking and fading out fast. However, most of the themes depicted on the cornice could be recognised. The horizontal narrow stripes of the cornice have been divided into small oblong shaped decorative frames. Each such frame is used for the depiction of a separate theme. These frames are 28 in number. The cornice stripes of the wall facing East and West display a panels each while the stripes of the walls facing South and North show 5 panels each. Each frame depicts a single theme. The space outside the frames is filled with decorative motifs interspered with peacocks and parrots.

Themes -

Except one case, all the rest of the subject matters of this place relates to mythological incidents. The themes are located according to the orders given below.

Cornice side facing South -

As we enter the mandapa from the Eastern side the cornice facing South is on our left. This side displays five paintings (1) Yogi, (2) Rama, Seeta, Hanumana, (3) Rama, some Saint and Hanumana, (4) Rama and Seeta, (5) Hunting scene.

Cornice side facing East -

This side is devoted to the manifestation of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, (6) Matsya avatara, (7) Kurma-avataara, (8) Varaha avataara, (9) Vaman avataara, (10) Narsinh avataara, (11) Parashurama avataara, (12) Rama avataara (Rama-Ravan Yudha) (13) Krishna avataara, (Kamsa-vadha) (14) Buddha avataara (Buddha seated on a lotus flower)

Cornice side facing North -

The frame in the corner between the side facing East and in the side facing North has already been recorded. This next frame displays the remaining avataara(i.e. (15) Kalki avataara) from the Dashavataara series. After this the themes are as follows, (16) Anusuya and Dattatraya, (17) Yashoda and Krishna, (18) Narada and Satyabhama, (19) Balakrishna.

Cornice side facing West -

This side shows iconic representations of the following deities (20) Chandra, (21) Surya, (22) Dattatreya, (23) Panchmukhi Shiva, (24) Ganapati, (25) Vishnu, (26) Kartikeya, (27) Vishnu, (28) The last picture is badly damaged hence it's theme could not be recognized.

The pictures in this temple are almost 'miniatures' and display very fine workmanship and details which include careful line work - details of the figures, dress and

ornaments. These pictures have architectural forms and landscapes in the setting. Figures are well executed. The females wear Maharashtrian sadi and choli. The colours used are crimson red, dark green (This colour has now changed it's shade and looks blackish) gambos yellow, white and black. Outlines are done in black, green and white. The empty space between two frames is filled up by bird motifs such as peacocks, parrots, cranes, tiger.

Phadnavis Wada -

The faded remains of the murals extant today make it clear that this building was once lavishly decorated with paintings. Today only a small room which was supposed to be the ladies' room (measuring 3.65 M X 3 M.) has murals on all it's four walls.

The paintings on these walls have suffered considerably due to rain water which has found it's way through the roof. The room has two doors, one in the wall facing South and the other in the wall facing North. The walls facing East and West have one window each. The upper portion of the walls have been used for the paintings while the lower portion is painted plain red. The paintings are fairly large in size.

Themes -

Wall facing East -

This wall has been divided into three broad vertical sections. The first section displays a bathing Nayika and her female attendants as the central piece. On either side of this painting a male figure of a musician is shown. In the horizontal stripe of the upper portion are depicted the Varaha-avatara, Kurma-avatara, Matsya-avatara and Narsinha-avatara. The second section shows two guldastas in the space on either side of the window. The upper stripe continues the Dashavatara theme and shows Vamana-avatara, Parushrama-avatara and Rama-avatara (Ahalyoddhara). The third section display Muralidhara in a niche. On either side of this niche iconographic figures of Garuda and Hanumana appear. The upper space of the wall shows Krishna-avatara (Kamsa-vadha), Buddha-avatara and Kalki-avatara.

Wall facing North -

This wall has two big frames (1.28 M X 1 M.) on either side of the door. The frame on the left has 'Krishna with the Astha-nayikas' while the other frame shows Rama-Panchayatana. In the upper space above the door is a procession depicting Surya in his chariot.

Wall facing West -

Out of the two frames on either side of the frame on the left shows Shiva's family while the one on the right depicts Ganesha with Saraswati. In the wall space just above the window is to be seen sheshashai Vishnu. Two big guldastas appear on either side of the window.

Wall facing South -

The two frames on either side of the door show iconographic representations of the deities Dattatreya and Devi. On the left hand panel is a standing figure of Dattatreya, while on the right hand side is Mahishasurmardini. The space above the door is utilized for a theme from the Mahabharata. In this picture Arjuna and Krishna are shown seated in a chariot.

The large size of the pictures has provided scope for large sized figures. Human figures are elongated but they appear rather stiff. Heave shading has been introduced for modelling the limbs and the face. These pictures consist of all usual items of the setting like planned gardens with fountains in the foreground, an elavated landmass with low hills, groups of buildings in the distance and a sky heavy with clouds. For the sky ultramarine is used mixed with white. A few ^utoches of vermilion are given to represent clouds shining in the setting sun. The paintings are executed against a crimson

background. Other colours used are vermillion and w
crimson red, gambas yellow, leaf green, ultramarine, white
and black outlines are done in double colours (red and
black).

Female figures wear Maharashtrian sadi and choli.
Male figures are attired in angarkha, short coats frock-coat
as the upper garment, while dhoti, chudidhar, short pants
serve as their lower garment. A dupatta is tied around
their waist. As the headgear divine figures wear heavily
be jewelled crowns secondary figures have pagadi of the
Maharashtrian fashion on their heads.

Pal

Khandoba Temple -

The Khandoba temple at Pal is quite famous in the
Maratha land. It was built about 400 years ago by a vani
named Aba bin Sheti Phadhole. Later on Dhanaji Jadhav, the
well known Maratha general added a hall or Mandapa to the
main shrine. Thus bestowing on it its present form.

Over the porch of the shrine is a rather large
spire rising about 16.70 M from the ground level. It tapers
from the base towards the top. All the spires are of brick
and ornamented in stucco with niches painted with
mythological motifs and iconographic representations of
divinities like Mahishasurmardini, Rama seeta, Shiva-Parvat.

Ganesha, the Dashavataras and other motifs like seated couples and floral motifs etc.

The interior of the main Shikhara is octogonal. In the spacious arches of these walls five Pandavas, Draupadi, Kunti, Dushhasana, Shakuni and Kichaka are shown. Besides this there appears a motif of two wrestlers. The antichamber of this roof has two dwarpalas depicted on it's wall. There are other paintings on the walls of this antichamber but these are in a very bad state of preservation.

Inside the super structure of the mandapa figures of attendants, musicians etc. appear. The ceiling is painted with a pattern common to all four walls and converging on the centre. Along with this a number of guldastas also occur.

The background of these paintings is red with gambaj yellow and dark green. Black is used for the hair and outlines.

The wide open eye of the figures of these paintings is noteble. The figures of the divinities are usually shown in their traditional costume while the secular figures wear contemporary costumes. The figures of dwarpalas are however, attired in long angarkhas, a waist-band or dupatta and a losely wound pagadi.

The outline of these paintings are in black, very bold and slightly broad.

SATARA -

New Palace -

The 'New-palace' at Satara was constructed in 1838 by Raja Shahaji. At present this huge building facing East is used for government offices. But one of it's spacious durbar-halls with wall-paintings and wood-carving has been preserved by the State Department of Archaeology. Besides the mural work in the said Darbar-hall, a small room near it and one more hall in the opposite wing also contain mural work. This hall is practically as large as the durbar-hall and at present serves as a Treasury Office. All these painted apartments surround a spacious courtyard which is the first courtyard of this palace. The hall under the department of archaeology and the small painted room are located on the right, that is they faces South. While the other hall (treasury office) on the left hand side from the entrance, faces North.

Darbar-hall -

This hall facing East measures 18 M x 7 M. and it's four walls, three possess murals. They are the walls facing West, East and South. The upper portion of the walls

serves as the surface for the painting, it is a long horizontal stripe divided by pilasters into rectangular frames, each one depicting a different subject.

The themes depicted in these murals occur commonly in Maratha structures.

Wall facing East -

(1) two wrestlers, (2) Devi being praised by gods and goddesses. (3) Hori or rangapanchami, (4) Vishnu, standing in Kamalasana.

Wall facing South -

This wall displays in all 10 pictures. They are (1) A warrior quenching his thirst at the village well. (2) Draupadi Swayamvara, (3) Seeta-Swayamwara, (4) Half the portion of the frame depicts Ganapati on the swing with Riddhi and Siddhi, while the remaining half shows Krishna on the swing with Radha and a group of gopis around the couple. (5) Rama-panchayatana, (6) Arjuna in the battle field of Kurukshetra alongwith Krishna, (7) Samudramanthana, (8) Shiva with his family, (9) Mahishasurmardini and other incarnations of the Devi, (10) Kaliyamardan.

Wall facing West -

(1) Garuda and Parvati seated on a tiger skin, (2) Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, (3) Sheshshai Vishnu, (4) Hanumana carrying Rama on his shoulders.

Treasury Hall -

This hall also measures 18 x 7 m in size and only one wall, that facing north bears murals. These are located in the upper portion as in the durbar-hall.

Except one frame, which depicts two figures of dwarfpalas all the remaining seven frames display the Dashavatara themes like Matsya-avatara, Kurma-avatara, Varaha-avatara, Narsimh-avatara, Vamana-avatara, Parashurama-avatara and Rama-avatara.

The murals in the small room adjoining the durbar hall are hidden behind the show cases and almiras which are kept in the room but two of the panels are partly visible.

The murals of this palace are executed on lime plaster and have white as the background. Other colours used are crimson, vermilion red, deep green, ultramarine, gamboj and pink. Outlines are done either in black or in a darker shade of the area which is outlined. The paintings are large sized measuring 1.5 x 1 m. In the paintings in darbar hall, the number of figures in each frame is normally large so as to cover the entire space available for the painting. While the paintings of the treasury hall have two or three figures in each frame and the remaining space is filled by the flower sprays, grass-tufts and

land forms. The figures are proportionate and manifest forceful movements. Their facial features are good.

Old palace -

The mansion known as the Old Palace was built in 1824 by Raja Pratapsing. Some twenty years back large areas of this palace, which is now used as a Secondary School have traces of murals. On the ground-floor, many of the niches contained small figures of divinities. The audience hall adjacent to it has a good deal of woodwork on it and the cornice of the hall has a hand painted with scrolls interwoven with parrots. On the upper storey two rooms, all the walls of which were profusely painted. The thematic paintings have been whitewashed but stripes of hashia like borders and a few guldasta panels remain. They are so very delicate and precise that it can be claimed without any contradiction that nowhere else such beautiful specimens are now extant in the Maratha land.

Vadgaon -

In the Shivaji museum at Satara some fragments of murals from Vadgaon are preserved. The subject matter of the mural work is of a religious nature and it includes themes like Rama Panchayatana, Krishna Jambuwanti, Rishis etc.

The pictures are composed in the horizontal panels and the figures are placed on a horizontal plan.

The colour pallet shows green, red, yellow, black and white. The background remains white while the outlines are done in black. The figures are delineated in a stylized manner having comparatively big heads and short figures. The deities appear in their traditional costume but the subordinate figures wear an angarkha, a dhoti, a dupatta around the waist and a pagadi over the head.

Wai -

Dev Wada (18th-early 19th centuries) -

— The double storeyed mansion situated in the Madhali-ali and now in the possession of Dev family is said to be originally owned by the father-in-law of the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao.

The style of architecture of this building belongs to the 18th century Maratha mansions and leaves no doubt about the date of its construction, that is during the late 18th century. This was also the most prosperous period for the owners. Thus it could be easily assumed that the murals were executed either during the late eighteenth century or in the early nineteenth century.

The flaking of the white wash applied on the

walls in later years has uncovered the remains of murals on a number of walls of the mansion. This makes it quite clear that this place was profusely decorated with murals. But at present mural work in good condition is to be found, only in two of the rooms of the upper storey. Out of these two rooms, one was said to be the bed-room of the owner and other was used by the ladies of the house or it may be called Zanana.

Three paintings of the Western Walls of the bedroom were taken out by the Archaeology department of Deccan College and preserved in its Museum.

The rooms which contain paintings are small in size and are badly lighted. All the four walls of the rooms were covered with murals. The upper half of the walls is treated as the surface for the painting. This horizontal stripe of the wall surface is divided into squares and vertical and horizontal narrow rectangles with the help of floral bands. The squares are used for the depiction of the main themes while the rectangular frames are used for the guldastas or single figures of secondary importance. An arch was painted over the upper part of the square, thus simulating an arched niche. These picture-frames are quite spacious measuring 1.90 M X 1.60 M and so on.

Painting of the Bed-room -

This room measures 3.30 M X 3 M. After climbing the staircase we get entry into this room from a door in the wall facing East. On the right hand side of the entrance is the wall from which the paintings have been taken out. This wall faces the North and was constructed on a bamboo frame with mud plaster. On the surface lime plaster was applied.

Rama Sita -

The first picture shows Rama and Seeta seated on a carpet (90 cms X 90 cms. size).

Shiva's family -

In this picture lord Shiva is seated with his consort Parvati on his lap while the child Ganapati, Nandi and Shivganas are shown around the couple (size 90 cms X 90 cms.)

Lakshmi - Narayana -

This divine couple is shown seated against a plain back-ground with figures of parrots depicted in upper corner on either side.

Wall facing West -

This wall had only one painting. In this painting

(size 1 M X 1 M.) a prince wearing a Peshwai pagadi listens the music of a singer, seated in his front. A few details are shown in the back-ground, there is a small pavilion, where the prince has kept his uttariya. At the top of the picture, that is from the ceiling glass chandelliers are hanging. The singer is holding a tanpura in her hand. She wears a nine yard sadi and has arranged her hairdo according to the fashion prevalent in the Maharashtra in 18th century. Along with other jewellery she wears a nosering.

Wall facing South -

This wall also has a door in the middle. On either side of the door there is a standing figure (size 90 cms X 60 cms.) of a Vaishnava dwarpala.

Wall facing East -

This wall also has one large picture of seated Ganapati (62 cms X 62 cms.) On either side of Ganapati there is a standing figure of a female who perhaps represent Ridhi and Siddhi. Both these female figures hold a lamp-tray (arati) in their hands.

The entrance door as stated earlier is in this wall and on either side of it there occur two figures of dwarapalas.

Ladies Room -

This room measures 3.53 M x 3 M and possesses painting on all of its' four walls. However, the wall facing west, which is made on a bamboo frame with mud plaster has a coat of lime. The plaster has developed big cracks in it. The condition of the paintings on this wall is very bad, they are on the verge of destruction. The other three walls have a durable surface of thick lime plaster applied on the brick construction.

We get entry in the room from a door in the wall which faces west. On the left hand side of the entrance is the wall which faces North.

Wall facing North -

This wall preserves two paintings executed in rectangular frames. In one picture Hanumana (size 45 cms. X 30 cms.) is shown, killing a demon while in the other picture is depicted Kaliyamardana (size 50 cms X 45 cms.). The space on the top portion of the wall is filled by an interesting motif of fighting rams.

Wall facing East -

As mentioned earlier, this wall is not in a good state of preservation but it shows two beautiful pictures. Both these two beautiful paintings are unfortunately badly damaged.

Seshashai Ganapati (size 60 cms X 1 M.) -

In this picture Ganapati like Vishnu is shown reclining on the coil bed of Sheshanaga with his consort massaging his feet.

Prince and The Dancer (size 30 cms X 75 cms.) -

In this picture a seated figure of a prince is watching a dance, performance of a dancer.

On either sides of this picture single figures of dwarpal occur.

Wall facing South -

This wall has a door in the corner. In the upper portion, on the space above the door, there appears a seated figure of Ganapati. The main theme of this wall is Rama-Seeta. The divine couple is shown seated on a throne, at the rear of them, stands Lakshmana while Hanumana sits near their feet in the posture of reverence. A rectangular frame nearby shows a standing figure of Hanumana.

Wall facing West -

River Krishna (size 53 cms X 38 cms). Picture on this wall shows personification of Krishna river which is the most revered river of the area. The Goddess Krishna is shown in a red sari seated on a fish which is floating in the water.

As the size of the picture frames is quite large, the figures are also big in size. The delineation is free and forceful. The faces of the figures are expressionless but they are beautiful.

The items appearing in the setting and the number of the figures are less, thus the picture-frames look empty.

Pictures in the ladies' room are done against a background of Indian red, while the pictures of the bed room have white colour for the background. The outlines in black are thick and vigorous. Other colours used are leaf green, crimson red, gamboj yellow.

The deities are shown wearing the dress which consists of a dhoti and an uttariya. They have a towering crown over their heads heavily studded with pearls and jewels. The female figures wear nine yard saris and cholis, while the dancers wear a large angarkha, chudidhar and dupatta. The costume of Royal figures consists of a chudidhar, long angarkha, dupatta around the waist and a Peshwai Pagadi over the head.

Devkule-Joshi Wada -

The building known as 'Devkule-Joshi Wada' in the close vicinity of the Vishvakosha building at Wai, preserves

a fragment of a Maratha mural, on one of the walls of it's courtyard. It is quite obvious that the painted fragment in the upper corner of the wall facing east constituted a small portion of much more extensive mural work that once covered a larger areas of the wall. However, at present this fragment displays only two themes. In the upper portion it shows the Rasalila, while the lower portion of the fragment exhibits rider on a caparisoned elephant accompanied by his retainers on foot.

These two remaining specimens of the painting seem to be done in the fresco technique with earth colours. However except red, white and black, other colours are now faded out.

Menawalikar Joshi Wada -

In the heart of the town opposite the Vishvakosha building is the 'Menawalikar Joshi Wada!'. It is a building typical of the Maratha period. A small room on the upper storey of this building contains a few specimens of the painting of the Maratha period, which could be ascribed to the late eighteenth century or the early nineteenth century.

The walls facing East and North in the room have paintings on them.

Themes -

On the wall facing East there is a large picture spread over the entire upper half of the wall facing North. (It measures 1.50 M X 1 M.) It is a picture of Mahishasurmardini. The wall facing East has three pictures. The frame on the extreme left of the wall shows a seated figure of Vishnu while Garuda stands near him in the posture of reverence. This picture measures 65 cms. X 90 cms. Next to the picture of Vishnu, Krishna is shown seated with the Ashtanayikas in a frame measuring, 1 M x 1.5 M. The last picture shows Muralidhar Krishna (60 cms X 1 M.)

The quality of the pictures in this room is not very high. They are rather crude with heavy figures. Pink colour is used for the background and the other colours used are bright yellow, leaf green, ultramarine blue, ultramarine mixed with white, red, white and black. Outlines are free moving but harsh and are done with double colours. First with the dark tone of the painted area and finally with black. Heavy shading is introduced on the body and faces of the figures. In the setting, items like glass handis or some occasional trees appear. The figures are heavily bejewelled. Female figures wear sari of Maharashtrian fashion.

Moti Bag -

The palace known as Motibag was constructed in

1789 A.D. by Anandrao Raste, a wealthy merchant, prominent Sardar and brother-in-law of the Peshwa Nanasaheb.

The Raste family has a number of residential mansions in Wai proper. The palace known as 'Motibag' is situated on the outskirts of Wai at a distance of approximately two kilometres to the West of the town. It was a pleasure resort of the owner. The main building of this fortified palace is surrounded by a beautiful garden with fountains in it and was on that account perhaps named, 'Motibag'. The magnificent building of the palace is double storeyed.

Along with the main hall or darbar-hall of the upper storey of this building, two small rooms adjoining the hall contain mural work. Out of these three apartments, it is the hall which possesses the bulk of murals. One room contains only some floral motifs while the other room has some mural work in the niches which seems to have been executed at a very late date.

The hall is rectangular and measures 12.30 M. X 3.60 M. The walls facing South and North have one door each which, the door in the northern wall serves as the entrance to the hall today. The western side of the hall has a number of open arches and wodan pillars. As such there are no paintings on this side. On all the rest of the three sides paintings are executed. The ceiling of the hall

is also richly painted with a diaper pattern while on all the four sides of the cornice are painted different themes.

Most of the colourwork that existed on the walls of this diwankhana is now damaged and it is difficult to identify the themes of some of the pictures. The murals on the cornice which is at some height, remain intact. The paintings on the walls and those that existed on the cornice of the hall and of the inner room differ in stylistic details and hence are described separately.

Painting on the Cornice -

The long, narrow, concave stripes of the cornice of the four sides of the durbar hall are bordered with beautiful floral hashias. For the execution of the various themes the stripes are divided into small rectangular panels. There are 104 of such panels in the hall and each panel measures approximately 22 cms X 18 cms. Normally every rectangle depicts a separate theme. But some of the themes require more space and thus spread over more than one rectangle. The maximum number of rectangles, thus used for a single theme is not more than four.

Themes -

Various mythological and a few secular themes which have been executed in the small rectangular frames

of the cornice could be identified as follows. In the four cornices figures of Sadhus are shown. Cornice facing East, the themes are as follows.

Cornice above the wall facing East -

Next to the figure of Sadhu the subjects are : a Kirtankar, Lakshmi-Narayana, Kalki-avatara, Buddha-avatara, Krishna-avatara (Krishna kissing Radha), Rama-avatara (Shurpanakha-vadha), Parshurama-avatara, Vamana-avatara, Narsimh-avatara, Varaha-avatara, Kurma-avatara, Matsya - avatara, a sage, Lakshmi, Bramha, Chandra, Surya, a king with attendants, Narada and Tumburu, seated Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, Saraswati, Vishnu and Garuda, seated figure of Bramha, Surya, Shiva and Parvati, Garuda and Airavata, bathing nayika, royal couple, Bhasmasura and Mohini, the lovers, reclining nayika, Narada, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Krishna on a ship, Ram-Seeta and Hanumana, Yashoda punishing Krishna, Narada and Satyabhama,.

Cornice above the wall facing North -

Kaliyamardana, A lady smoking hukka, two girls playing phugadi, Parvati feeding the child Ganapati, Shiva and Parvati, Parvati combing the hair of Ganapati , Govardhanoddharana, nayika playing chakrin (yo-yo), standing figure of a nayika, Laila and Majnuh.

Cornice above the wall facing West -

Dancing Krishna, on either sides Gopis, a royal figure enjoying a dance performance in his darbar, Gopis proceeding to the market, Yashoda milking the cow and Krishna standing near her, seated royal figure (with a Peshwai Pagadi), Ragini Bhairavi, standing royal figure (supposed to be the figure of Chhatrapati Shahu), Sheshashai Vishnu, standing figure of a nayika holding flowering branch in her hand, nayika holding a branch of a tree on either sides of her deer, Ahalyoddharana, seated figure of Ganapati, on either side of the deity are female attendants, Saraswati seated on a peacock, child Ganapati and Parvati, seated Lakshmi-Narayana, Lakshmi seated on a lotus, Parvati feeding the child Ganapati, Ukhal Bhandhan, a nayika standing near a lotus pond after her bath, seated Shiva, Rama-Seeta and Hanumana, seated Shiva, Standing nayika holding a flowers in her hand Danaleela, fluting Krishna with Gopis, nayika standing near a lotus pond, Krishna and Gopis under a tree, standing couple , Mahishasurmardini, Ragini Hambiri.

Cornice above the wall facing South -

Krishna doing the hair of Radha, some royal figure, a mango seller, Bakasura-vadha, seated Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, Ravana begging alms from Seeta,

standing figure of Vishnu with female attendants on either side, Gopivastraharana, Srawankumar talking his parents on pilgrimage.

As mentioned earlier the pictures are miniatures, depicted on very small wall surfaces. In most of the cases one or two figures are shown within each frame. The figures are well proportioned, have pleasing facial features. However, delineation of the hands and the feet of the figure is weak. Outlines are done in bold lines. The background of the pictures is painted in pastel shades of green, blue, red and orange by mixing white in them. Main forms and figures are painted with bright colours. Gold is also used. These pictures exhibit all the finer details of the forms. Costumes worn by the deities consist of a dhoti, uttariya and a towering crown over the head. Royal figures are attired in chudidhar or dhoti, angarkha and chandan chola, an uttariya over the shoulder and a dupatta tied around the waist. They wear pagadies of both Maharashtrian as well as Rajasthani fashion. Female figures in the mythological themes mostly wear nine yard sari and choli in the Maharashtrian fashion. Nayika and heroines of the themes of romantic stories wear chudidhar long angarkhas over short bodies and dupatta over the head.

For the background architectural forms, trees, flower-spray and lotus ponds are used.

Murals on the wall surface of the darbar-hall -

As mentioned before the western side of this rectangular hall is quite open, the remaining three sides providing the surface for the execution of the murals. Each wall surface is encompassed within an arch. The area within it is utilised to execute the murals. The walls facing North and South have an identical scheme, while there is some difference in the layout on the wall, facing West. The lower portion of the walls is invariably painted red.

Walls facing South and North -

In both these walls there is a door in the centre and the space is encompassed by an arch. The space outlined within the arch is further divided into five panels. Of these two on either side of the door have been turned into niches within which paintings are introduced. The arches are done in relief and are richly decorated with floral and geometrical motifs.

Wall facing West -

This wall measures 12.30 M in length and has seven arches. Out of these, three arches in the centre are open and serve as the entrance to the inner room or Sadar. Two arches on either side are closed and thus constitute the ground for the murals. Within every arch

there is a niche in the centre, which contains some important theme.

Themes -

The themes are recorded in a clock wise fashion and thus the themes from the wall facing North came first. As mentioned earlier the painted area or the arch of this wall is divided into five sections. Following themes are shown in these sections. Section No.1 (Niche) marriage of Rama (this picture is badly damaged). Section No.2. A prince on the well. Section No.3 which is a rectangular frame in the wall space just above the door shows an interesting scene, that of Ganesha-hori. In this picture Ganesha is shown enjoying the Ranga Panchami festival in the company of a number of females. Section No.4. Rupamati-Baj Bahadur on horses. The painting of section No.5 is badly damaged yet the few surviving figures give some idea about the subject matter, it seems that this picture displays a royal figure seated in the company of some dignitaries.

Wall facing South -

The niche on our right hand side shows two themes. The lower half of the space shows wrestlers in a gymnasium and the upper half depicts a hunting scene. Section No.2 above the space of the niche has the 'Gopi vastraharana '

theme. The rectangular section No.3 (The space above the door in the wall) displays ' Samudramanthana', Section No.4 shows Balakrishna. Section No.5 is again a niche. It display three themes. The space is horizontally divided in to three parts , the upper part shows a king with his beloved while the standing figures of female attendants watch the sport of love. The middle part has a bathing nayika with the female attendants attending on her, the lower part depicts, again a hunting scene.

As mentioned earlier the condition of the painting on the wall surface is not good, the colours are chipping and fast fading. However the remnants reveal work of great merit. The themes mostly display a good number of figures. The figures are in actions and display a good variety of postures. The themes like hunting, gymnasium etc. give a lot of scope for the same. Figures are short in height with comparatively larger heads. Their facial features consist of a very receding hair line, a pointed nose, thin lines of the lips and a receding chin. The faces are round with wide open eye.

The dresses of the male and female figures are of the same variety as the costumes of the figures on the cornice. However, the delineation of the sari of the female figures is done in the South Indian style.

The setting of the pictures show the same traditional items as landscapes architectural forms etc.

All the paintings are done on a crimson red background. Remaining of red, gamboj yellow, green (dark) are still there. Outlines are hair thin and done with black colour.

Painting in the Sadar -

The adjoining Sadar of the main hall displays niche decoration, glass paintings of floral motifs and on one of the walls. The space in the niches of the walls is filled with the miniature paintings. The themes of these paintings are as follows -

1) Rangapanchami, (Krishna and Radha along with nine gopis), 2) Dancing Krishna with four gopis, 3) Seated Ganapati with female attendants, 4) Shiva-Parvati and Narada, 5) Krishna Arjuna, 6) Sheshashai Vishnu, 7) This picture has been divided into three arches. Arch A) Seated divine couple, Arch B) Saraswati, Bramha, Vishnu, Shankar, Ganapati, Arch C) Bramha seated on a Kamalasana, 8) A Nayika, 9) This picture also displays three themes - A) Nari-Ashva, B) Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, C) Lakshmi - Narayana, 10) Seated Nayika.

The execution of these pictures is very fine and colour scheme is bright with strong shades of vermillian,

gamboj yellow and leaf green.

Patwardhan Wada -

The double storeyed mansion of the Patwardhan family in Wai proper is another mansion which contains a good number of eighteenth century, well preserved murals. The exact date of construction of the mansion and consequently the exact date of the execution of the murals are unknown. But most probably the mansion and the murals both belong to latter half of the eighteenth century.

The murals exist in one of the rooms of the upper storey, which measures 4 M X 3 M. This room has four entrances. From the door in the wall facing West one enters the room. On the upper half of all the four walls murals are executed. The surface is broadly divided into six frames, each outlined with bands of floral designs. These bands also surround the doors, windows and niches in the wall, while the lower portion of the wall remains plain. These six frames display various themes within their respective area. Different themes shown within one picture frame are separated with the help of small curves of thick horizontal lines, which also serve to show the elavation of the land mass.

Themes -

Following themes have been found on the walls.

Wall facing South -

This wall has one door at the extreme right hand side. The upper half of the wall surface has been divided into two parts of equal size. The frame on the left hand side of the wall has a window in the middle and the pictures are laid out around this window. The themes depicted are Gopi-vastraharana, Krishna stealing butter, Krishna sporting a goddess, Sheshashai Vishnu, Kaliyamardan occur. In the horizontal stripe above the window five incarnations of Vishnu, viz. Kalki-avatara, Buddha-avatara, Krishna-avatara (Kamsa-vadha), Rama-avatara (Ahalyoddhara) and Parashurama-avatara are shown.

The second frame shows following themes -
Ramjanma, Ramapanchayatana, Krishna doing the hair of Radha, Krishna and Gopis. The horizontal stripe of the wall surface in the upper portion shows the continuation of the Dashavatara series. These include, Vamana-avatara, Narsimha-avatara, Varaha-avatara, Kurma-avatara and Matsya-avatara.

Wall facing East -

This wall has one frame which measures 1.20 M X 4 M. and occupies the whole upper half of the wall. In

the centre of the frame there is one niche in which a seated Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi is shown. The left half of the frame displays two themes. They are Radha and Krishna among the Gopis and Krishna enjoying Rangapanchami festival along with Radha and Gopis. In the space above the niche Shiva and Parvati are shown playing Chauser. Near this theme a scene of Goverdhanoddharana is seen. In the space just below the theme Goverdhanoddharana and on the right hand portion of the picture frame a very good manifestation of the Draupadi Swayamvara occurs.

Wall facing North -

This wall has two doors. In the space above the door which is on the extreme left of the wall, is a picture of Mahishasurmardini (45 cms X 60 cms). The whole upper half of the wall measuring 1.65 M X 4 M. and encircling the other door is roughly divided into two parts. The left half of the frame shows Krishnalila themes which include, Kaliyamardana, Nand-yashoda, Krishna and Gopis and again Krishna with Radha. The upper space has putanavadha horizontally spread from one end to the other. The right half of the frame displays a seated royal couple, (The male wears a Peshwai Pagadi) with attendant on either side, Ravana begging alms from Seeta, Jatayu-vadha and Shivaji family.

Wall facing West -

This wall has the entrance to the room. It also has one picture frame which is automatically divided in the middle due to this door. The space above the door is also utilized for painting. The left hand side of the frame shows on a very good depiction of Rasaleela. The stripe of the upper portion of the wall has Shiva-Parvati, Saraswati and a devotee. Yashoda punishing Krishna. The right hand portion displays a detailed scene of Samudra-manthana.

But for the exception of the picture of a royal couple, all the paintings of the room are devoted to mythological subjects.

As already mentioned various themes are depicted on a common background.

The theme is composed in a horizontal space or on a quadrangular space, according to the demand of the theme. The themes display a good number of figures with only a few items like trees, architectural forms and river strips to fill up the background. For filling up the empty space of the picture, motifs like birds (peacocks, parrots) flower sprays and grass tufts are used.

Human figures are proportionate but slightly elongated. Their facial features are sharp.

All the murals are done against a white background, with a colour palette consisting of red, blue, yellow and green (it has now turned into blackish tone). Line work is done in black, it is quite free and forceful.

Raste Mansion (Government Press) -

The huge Raste Mansion in Gangapuri area at Wai seems to be constructed in the second half of the eighteenth century. This double storeyed building now turned into government press preserves a few specimens of the painting of the Maratha period. Today paintings remain on the upper portion of the walls of the first court. These walls have windows at certain intervals and the wall space around the windows is painted over . As the walls are quite open to atmosphere decay in the paintings is inevitable. Except red, black and white all other colours are washed out.

Themes -

The space at either ends of the three walls (the walls facing East, North and South), displays big guldastas set in a painted arch. The other motifs executed on the walls consist of iconic representation of Ganapati, Hanumana and Parashurama. At two places Yashoda and Krishna are shown while most of the portion of the walls is filled with motifs like standing male and female figures, a seated

king and his retainers, Musician, Cows, Deer and Parrots.

As already mentioned the colours of these paintings are faded. However the red used for the background of these paintings is still intact. Outlines are done in black. The figures and forms depicted on the walls do not constitute a thematic whole but are more in the nature of individual motifs.

Miscellaneous -

Besides the murals recorded above there are several others in old structures in the town.

Lakshmi-Narayan Mandir -

In Madhali Ali this temple is located. The mural work in this temple exists on the walls of Sabha Mandapa. The wall above the main entrance to the temple displays some large-sized guldastas almost covering the entire upper portion of the wall. The pictures on the walls of the Sabha Mandapa display mythological themes. These murals probably belong to a very late date.

Facing the Lakshmi-Narayan Mandir, there is another temple in the Madhali Ali. The facade of this temple is covered with murals depicting some mythological themes.

Vyankatesha Mandir -

The walls of the Sabha-Mandapa of this temple are decorated with murals. Except two or three paintings the whole work is now lost.

Vishnu Mandir -

A Vishnu temple near Vyankatesh temple also has some survivals of mural work.

Koteshwar Mandir -

Koteshwar Mandir in the Dharmapuri Lane was profusely decorated with murals but at present only one picture, that of Shiva, remains.

Kothawale Wada -

This mansion in Raviwar Peth preserves a few interesting remains of mural work on the walls of one of its rooms. The paintings include a figure of Lamshmi - Vishnu and some decorative guldastas.

Girl's School -

The hall on the upper storey of the local girl's School building which was originally a mansion of the Raste family contains beautiful diaper patterns on the ceiling.

Likewise numerous fragmentary specimens of murals are to be found in the town of Wai, which show that mural

painting received extensive patronage in this town.

Wathar -

Wathar (Nimbalkar) situated at the distance of eight km. from Phaltan in Satara district is one of the places that flourished during the late Maratha period that is in latter part of the eighteenth century. Today the dilapidated and desolate mansions tell the tale of its past glory. This was the seat of the wealthy aristocratic Maratha family of Naik Nimbalkars. In fact they are known as the ' Wathar Branch '.

The whole place is surrounded by a strong fort wall and each of the nine manssions in its turn has a strong rampart around it, these ' Gadhis ' as they were known reflected the might and glory of their owner. Each one contains a beautiful mansion within. All the nine manssions that constitute the main attraction of this place were constructed by Kusaji Naik Nimbalkar, the founder of the family, sometime during 1796 to 1805 A.D. Besides these mansions there exist a few other structures like temples, wells and a few small but typical Maratha mansions of the commoners, of the same date. According to contemporary fashion most of the old residential buildings and the temples contained mural work. This is evident from the survivals of the murals which are at present to be

found in a number of buildings. Except the murals in a few places which survive to such an extent as to give some idea about the original appearance and scheme, the work of other places is badly damaged. Thus the paintings of the Nimbalkar mansion, the Rama mandir and a small dilapidated house could be studied.

Dilapidated House -

Facing the Nimbalkar mansion there existed a dilapidated house which had preserved a few specimens of old mural work in one of its rooms. The house was large since deserted and was in a very bad state of preservation. The roof of the house already got destroyed bearing the mural work on the rickety walls, quite exposed to the natural elements. Therefore, the Archaeology Department of Deccan College, Pune removed some of the pieces from the walls with the permission of local authorities. These are now preserved in the Museum of the Department. The house faced the west. As usual the lower portion of the wall was painted with plain red. The upper wall surface was utilised as the ground for the painting. The wall surface was divided into horizontal and vertical sections, which also enclosed the niches in the walls. The main subjects were executed within the niches, while the space surrounding the niches either had panels containing some thematic motifs or this space was filled with floral motifs.

Themes -

The murals of this mansion mainly depicted Krishnalila which included episodes like Kaliya-mardhan, Danaleela, Krishna Fluting, Krishna and Radha engaged in phugadi. Besides these episodes the wall facing South had a very beautiful representation of Lakshmi-Narayana in a niche. Secular themes were not altogether absent. In one picture a Maratha royal figure was shown enjoying a dance performance. In another picture a Maratha royal figure was shown holding his shy consort by the hand. She had turned her head in the other direction while a seated female figure and a female with fly whisk watched the happy couple. The paintings in which some figures of Maratha persons were executed were badly damaged but some male figures playing 'Chaut^{sa}tra' could be noticed. A small fragment showed a beautiful female figure attired in Maharashtrian Sadi and Choli, in a dance posture.

The movements of the human figures are vigorous. But their bodies are not proportionate, the heads being larger than the bodies.

Female wear Maharashtrian sadi and choli while the costume of male figures in the secular scene consist of an angarkha as the upper garment and chudidhar or dhoti as the lower garment. They wear pagadi of the Peshwai fashion. Deities are dressed in the traditional manner and having Karanda Mukutas on their heads.

Bricks and mud walls serve as the carrier for these paintings. On the wall a thick coat of mud is given over which a plaster of lime and sand appear which is finally coated with a fine wash of lime. The background is plain red and the other colours are crimson, gamboj, deep green, ultramarine, white and black. Outlines are done in double colour that are red and black.

Naik - Nimbalkar Mansion -

From the group of the nine mansions of the Naik Nimbalkar family remains of mural work could be noticed on the walls of only three or four mansions. However, except in the case of one mansion mural work in all other mansions is today on the verge of destruction. The work even in this mansion is not in too good a state of preservation but at least is in such a condition as to add some important information to our knowledge of Maratha mural painting.

This mansion was once profusly decorated with mural work. Today murals could be seen on the outer walls of the main structure, in the central hall or durbar-hall of the ground floor and on the walls of one of the adjoining rooms.

Darbar-hall -

This rectangular hall is open from the Eastern side and has a spectacular interior decoration. The ceiling

has a colourful diaper patten made of timber frames. The walls have elaborately carved groups of niches, of those in the lower portion of the walls contain murals.

Themes -

This hall was also used for the celebration of Krishna Janma-asthami and perhaps for this reason, paintings depict the Ragmala theme along with representation of deities like Mahishasur~~m~~ardini, Shiva, Krishna and the divine couple Rama and Seeta. As mentioned before the pictures are located on the lower portion of the wall and hence have easily fallen a pray to human ^{va} ~~v~~andalism. While natural elements have also of late caused them a great harm. However, some of the themes could be recognized.

Wall facing South -

This wall displays two painting in the niches which are located on either side of the door in the wall. The niche of the right hand side shows a representation of Ragini, Bhairavi and the niche on the other side displays Shiva with his family.

Wall facing East -

This wall has six niches. The first niche from the right hand side shows Krishna. The painting from the

second niche could not be identified as it is badly damaged. The third niche represents raga Hindola (Krishna seated on a swing along with Radha and group of Gopis around them). The fourth and fifth niches also represent some raga, but the paintings are badly damaged. The seventh niche shows Mahishasurmardini.

Wall facing North -

This wall also has one door in the centre that leads into the side room (which also has a few paintings). The niches on either side of the door show one theme each. The niche on the right shows Rama and Seeta seated in a throne while the painting in the niche on the left represents raga Vasant (Krishna dancing with Gopis.)

These miniatures are done on crimson red background. The ragmala pictures are bordered with a rectangular frame of bright red and the name of the raga is inscribed in the upper portion of the picture which it depicts. The other colours used are deep green, gamboj yellow, black and white. Blue is absent. Outlines are done in black. Colours are laid flat, there being no attempt at modelling. The execution of the whole picture especially the line work is fine. For ornaments and patterns of the apparels gold is used. Pearls of the ornaments are embossed. The figures are proportionate with beautiful

facial features.

The female figures in the pictures wear North Indian dress, while the male figures are attired in a dhoti, uttariya and a crown over their heads. The crown of Krishna is slightly different here being three pointed.

Side room -

A small room adjoining this hall bears traces of paintings. Colour work exists on the inner and on one of the outer walls which faces East. These paintings stylistically differ from the paintings in the central hall and seem to belong to a later date.

The inner walls are profusely decorated with 'Guldastas' and other floral motifs. While the three niches in the wall facing West display iconic representations of divine couples. The first niche from the right shows Ganapati with his consorts, the second depicts Rama and Seeta while the third one shows Radha and Krishna. From the outer side of the same wall only one theme could be identified which shows Krishna embracing two Gopis (each on either side).

The paintings are done on a plain lime-plastered walls. The colours used are deep green, gamboj yellow, ultramarine blue, bright red, white and black. Outlines are done in black. The paintings are decidedly crude,

as compared to those in the durbar-hall.

Rama Mandir -

In the vicinity of the mansions of the Nimbalkars, a temple to Rama probably contemporary to them exists. This temple faces East and preserved some old murals on the outer wall of the Sabhagriha.

The walls which have paintings face South and North and the paintings are located in upper portion of the wall. Each one is set within a rectangular panel horizontally laid. There are today six such panels on each wall. Each panel is utilized for the depiction of a single theme or some decorative motifs. The pictures are large sized. These murals show iconic representation of the deities.

Wall facing North -

This wall has six panels. The two panels in the middle show standing figures of dwarpalas. Other four panels display decorative motifs.

Wall facing South -

The first panel from right shows Hanumana and the other panels have a Garuda, Jay, Vijay, Hanumana, Ganapati in that order.

These murals are exposed to the effects of the natural elements but being executed in the fresco technique

the colours of these murals still remain in a satisfactory condition. The background colour of all the paintings is invariably red. Besides this, emerald green, yellow ochre and white are the colours which survive.

Each panel represents a single figure. On either side of the figure there is a beautiful guldasta occupying a considerable space of the panel. The figures are highly stylized and good looking.

The deities are shown wearing their usual dress. Hanumana and Garuda wear shorts, a waist-band and a crown over the head. The figures of dwarpalas are elaborately dressed. They wear a full sleeved long angarkha and a waist over it. As the lower garment these figures wear chudidhar pajama. There is a waist band around the waist and a dupatta over the shoulders. On ^{the} heads of these dwarpalas are loosely wound pagadis. Their shoes are painted and have embroidery on them. In one of the hands is held a highly ornamental sword. The pagadis and angarkhas are patterned with dots while the ends of the dupattas have heavy golden brocades. The ends of the angarkhas, ~~the~~ ^{its} ~~calfs~~ and ~~the~~ ^{its} ~~sleeves of it~~ ~~on the wrist~~ are decorated with frill. on the calfs and the wrist

SECTION THREE

ANALYSIS, COMPARISON
AND EPILOGUE.

ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON.

A detailed description of every piece of mural painting noticed and studied by the author is recorded in the previous section. Here an attempt is made to analyse the characteristic features that mark these murals and then to compare these with each other as well as with works in other regions. Such an analysis would enable one to perceive the direction of internal growth and development of Maratha murals and also to establish the relationship of the Maratha murals with those of contemporary date. In other words it would be possible to say that the eighteenth century Maratha artists inherited from their forefathers and what they were able to learn from their contemporaries in the regions like Malwa, Rajasthan and Pahadi hill states or for that matter from areas like nearby Karnataka or slightly distant South India proper.

The analysis and comparison is undertaken with relation to certain important aspects.

These could be enumerated as under -

- 1) Subject Matter.
- 2) Layout
- 3) Composition

- 4) Human Figure
- 5) Costume and Ornaments.
- 6) Landscape.
- 7) Insignia and Furniture.
- 8) Technique.

Subject Matter -

A large majority of the themes depicted in the murals is what could be called religious or puranic. The ten incarnations of Vishnu and Krishnalila are the themes which constitute the main subject matter of this category, Samudramanthan and Draupadiswayamvara are the two most popular mythological themes. Next are the themes like Ganesha, Shiva and his family, Devi, especially as Mahishasurmardini, Lakshmi-Narayana, Ramapanchayatana, Garuda, Hanumana, Dattatreya etc. which occur most commonly. Depictions of Navagrahas occur but not quite frequently.

Among the secular subjects are a few battle scenes, durbar scenes or meeting of royal persons or portraitures, procession of a royal person, a few scenes reminiscent of incidents from Laila-Majnuh, Rupamati, Bajbahadur, a prince quenching his thirst on a village well, Ragmala depictions and a few miscellaneous themes appear.

In any discussion of the religious subject matter

of the Maratha murals a few things are noteworthy. First of all it is found that a set of themes is generally depicted everywhere. However at the places where limited painting space was at the disposal of the artist, instead of the whole set a few significant items from the conventional set are represented. Such themes normally included. The Dasha-avatara, Raslila, Kaliya-mardana, Lakshmi-Narayan or Rama-panchayatana, Mahishasurmardini etc. (Nana Wada, Pune, Sathe Wada Wai, Jagatguru Math Nasik.)

Although the themes mentioned above usually appear in the wall paintings that decorate the structures of the Hindu patrons, all over the country, especially in the Rajasthan and Hill states of Himachal Pradesh, some typical characteristics could be perceived in the Maratha murals. The depiction of the Dasha-avatara of Vishnu appear in the contemporary murals of North India. However, its existence in the Maratha tradition could be attributed to local traditions handed down from earlier centuries. The theory of ten incarnations of Vishnu was well-established from very early times. The sculptures of Chalukya as well as Rashtrakuta dynasties depict this theme vividly.

The 16th century murals from neighbouring Vijayanagara State, also represent the Dasha-avatars. The themes was popular in other media of artistic expression too. It is said that the Dasha-avatari drama was sponcered

by a Malla King of Vishnupura during 7th century in the region of Karnataka. The tradition of this play reached in Maharashtra via Goa and Konkan. Literary references of^{to} the Dasha-avtari dramas are found in 'Dasabodha'. During the 18th century these performances enjoyed royal patronage in Maharashtra. The performances of the Dasha-avatari plays was an established tradition in the rural areas and it was adopted by the sophisticated class in urban areas soon. It used to be performed in ~~the~~ public places like^{the} temple^s at the time of religious festivals or the festival of village deity. The higher and rich^{er} class^{es} had their private shows at their residence.¹ All these facts show that the Dashavatari tradition had its roots deep in the cultural, social and religious life of Maratha society. It seems that the manner of presentation of the themes in the drama also must have exercised some influence on the depiction of the theme in painting.

Roughly speaking the following sequence can be seen in Dashavatari Dramas. First enters the Sutradhara, director of the show. Then generally follows Ganesha accompanied by Riddhi and Siddhi. The deity is followed by Saraswati seated on a peacock. The goddess of knowledge gives a dance performance accompanied by her devotees who pray her with^{to} the tune of the veena and the mridanga, then actors of the drama follow^s and the drama consists of

episodes from the Dashavatara legend. Scenes from Krishnalila, Rasalila are next to follow. Some of the episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are also staged. Of these 'Usha-harana' or Draupadi-swayamvara were the most popular and these generally came at the very end of the whole show.² The manner and the sequence of the performance change from place to place and from party to party. However, the broad outline of the themes remains the same as mentioned above. In the Maratha murals a faint echo of this tradition could be discerned. As these dramas were performed in the premises of the temples it seems quite possible that they found their reflection through the medium of line and colour on the walls of the temples. In the wall painting, Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi occurs at almost all the places. Along with ^{them} the goddess Saraswati seated on a peacock with her devotees near her invariably appears, ~~with her devotees near her invariably appears.~~ Saraswati appears in murals from some other regions as well, but in maratha murals it occurs far more frequently, almost invariably and hence it stands to reason to surmise that it is the tradition of Marathi folk-drama that finds its echo here.

Another noteworthy feature is the depiction of Parashurama in the Someshvara temple at Pashan. Usually the ten incarnations are represented almost in the same

fashion everywhere. In the present case, however, the artist has been successful in imparting it a certain 'local' colour. Usually this incarnation (Parshurama) is shown fighting with Sahasrarjuna but in the Pashan mural the deity is shown in the fields talking to a farmer near a well. This scene suggests the latter part of his life when the deity rehabilitated the Konkan or Aparanta region i.e. the Western coast. Hence this depiction manifesting the constructive aspect of Parashurama as locally known.³

The author has yet to come across a single miniature or mural depicting the theme of Draupadi - Swayamvara from any of the North Indian schools. However, this theme seems to be quite popular in Maratha murals. (Harinarayana Math, Benawadi, Patwardhan Wada, Wai, Someshwara mandir, Pashan, Rangamahar Nipani, Rajwada Satara.) This theme from the Mahabharata seems to be extremely popular in the South since early times not only in painting but in sculptures also. A sculpture belonging to the Hoysal period (12th century) at Belur depicts Arjuna aiming at the piscine target. In the Vijayanagar painting this theme appears in the 15th century at Hampi. The same tradition must have continued in the Maratha region. Although we do not have any specimen of this theme in the period intervening between the Vijayanagar murals and the Maratha works the basic similarity in the

representations from the two regions is unmistakable.

Ganesha is another theme of great interest in the present context. Ganesha with Riddhi and Siddhi is accepted as a symbol of auspiciousness in Hindu tradition and thus appear in the painting of North Indian Schools. Yet in Maharashtra the deity has been given a much greater importance and hence the deity appears in the Maratha murals far more frequently. The worship of Ganesha was quite popular in the Maratha society. The Peshwas were great devotee of Ganesh and the walls of the gate-house of Shaniwar-Wada bear huge depictions of Ganesha as the owners could have his darshana while entering the palace as well as while leaving it. The most noteworthy picture of Ganesha, perhaps exists in the murals of Dev-wada (Wai). Here the deity is shown lying on the coil-bed of Seshanaga like Sheshashai Vishnu. His consort is also shown massaging his feet like Lakshmi. Such a depiction of Ganesha is not to be found anywhere else.

In the murals of Motibag, as usual this deity is shown seated in profile having his consorts standing on his either side, at two places. Besides these, murals also display some interesting depiction of the deity. One of the walls shows a picture in which the god is enjoying Ranga-panchami festival in the company of females. He holds two females on his either sides. The same wall bears

paintings in which the child Ganesha is represented and it includes scenes like Parvati feeding the child Ganesha, at one place she is shown combing his hair, another picture shows him as a crawling child. In the pictures of Shiva parivara at several places, Ganesha as a child is shown seated on the lap of Parvati. The picture of the same theme at Dev Wada represents Ganapati not seated on the lap of his mother but crawling near the divine couple. A few toys are also shown with the child.

At Pal in the temple of Khandoba, huge full-sized single depiction of ^{the} five Pandavas, Draupadi, Kunti, Shakuni ^{are} ~~is~~ present. Such type of depiction from the Mahabharata is rare in the murals of other regions. The above example makes it evident that the Maratha artists depicted themes which were locally popular.

Another frequently appearing motif in Maratha Murals is Durga Killing the demon Mahishasura. This theme is quite common in the murals of North Indian painting while since early medieval period it was a popular motif in South Indian sculptures too.

Maratha society was under the impact of Vaishnavism and hence the Krishnalila themes constitute a major subject matter of the murals. The episodes and motifs narrated in the tenth canto of the Bhagawata-purana and in the contemporary vernacular literature of North

India inspired the painting of that region. The same episodes and motifs appeared in the Maratha murals. The main reason for the similarity of themes of both the regions is that they both derived their subject matter from a common source that is the Bhagawata-purana. Another important source was the literature. The literature of both the regions contained similar trends and treatment. Madhura Bhakti of the Krishna cult flourished in the literature which provided themes and motifs for the painting in both the regions which normally include Raslila, Gopi-vastraharana, Muralidhara Krishna, Goverdhan-dharana, Kaliya Mardana, Danlila, Krishna doing hair of Radha, Bakasur Radha etc. under the same category motifs like Narikunjara appearing at a few places Motibag, Wai, Ranga-mahal, Chandwad, could be placed. This motif shows a composite figure of an elephant constituted by nine females. The divine couple Radha and Krishna is shown seated on the elephant. Regarding this motif it has been found that, it was one of the popular motifs in the North Indian Painting of late mediaval period. But perhaps the motif is seen first in the ^{Jaina} illustrated manuscripts of Western Indian School, where composite animal forms, viz. elephant, Horse, Camel, Deer as well as forms like Shibika cart are represented as the vehicle of Madan and Rati or some other deity. In the South the Vijayanagara murals of 16th century also depict this theme. It is quite obvious

that the motif was widely popular in the Indian painting during the mediaval period and therefore it is difficult to state that the Maratha murals borrowed the motif from North India or from South India; or it was prevalent in the local tradition itself.

As mentioned earlier the literature and philosophy of the Varakari sect of Maharashtra has given importance to ' Madhura Bhakti'. The literature of this sect narrates the amorous aspect of the Radha-Krishna Cult. Thus the themes of loves of Radha and Krishna appear in the Maratha murals. However the followers of Varkari sect worship the idol of Vithoba which is a local form of Krishna. The dark complexioned Vithoba, stands on a brick with his hands resting on his hips. His consort Rakhumai or Rukmini stands away from him in the same posture. It is quite surprising that this popular idol is rarely found in the Maratha murals- except in the solitary example in the murals at Chandori in Nasik district.

This would lend credence to the view that the whole repertoire of Krishnalila was inherited by the Maratha artists from Northern India.

Now are to be considered themes of a secular nature. As mentioned earlier these display themes like durbar scenes, meeting of the royal persons, dance and

music consorts in darbars, wrestling bouts gymnasts, processions, battle scenes, episodes from popular romances, Ragmala and nayak-nayika themes.

The pictures of this variety are comparatively less in number and the same themes are found repeated at most of the places. It seems a few themes were introduced in the Maratha murals from the miniature albums (Murakkas) done in Rajasthani, late Mughal or mixed Mughal Rajasthani styles of the late medieval period. Such albums or set of miniatures were ^{owned} possessed by the art lovers of the affluent class of the country. In this context it would be interesting to discuss a few motifs.

Meeting of the royal persons - This theme was represented in the Maratha murals quite frequently. The inscribed miniatures depicting the same theme in which a Peshwa shown seated along with his subordinate are to be found in the museums of Maharashtra. It seems that this motif was borrowed in the mural from the miniature. This motif also carry^{ies} some elements of portraiture.

Dance and Music Consorts -

At a number of places this theme is depicted in a stereotyped manner. However, in the murals of Dev Wada a painting depicting a Peshwa enjoying music rendered by a beautiful young singer displays great individuality.

Ragamala Nayak-Nayika -

The murals of the Nimbalkar mansion represent a set of Ragamala themes. The murals of Motibag show depiction of Ragini Bhairavi, Todi, Hamviri etc. From the Ragamala series representations of Todi and Kakumbha ragini seem to be extremely popular and they appear most frequently. It seems that the tradition of the 'Ragamala' was not quite popular in Maratha society hence only a few motifs of this interesting theme could gain popularity in the Maratha murals. And again they seem to be used more as decorative motif rather than for their contents. This also could be said about the scenes from the popular romances like Laila-Majnuh, Rupamati-Bajbahadur, a prince quenching his thirst at the village well. The scene showing a prince with his retinue approaching some women at a well and asking for water, was widely popular in late Mughal miniatures. The subject was sometime labelled 'Dara Shukoh stopping in his flight'. Three painting of the same subject are in the collection of Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery of which one in the Oudh Kalam represents Nawab Safdar Jung at a well. It is quite obvious that the theme was treated as an interesting motif and thus seems to have entered in Maratha murals. The same reason probably explains the appearance of Laila- Majnuh and Rupamati-Bahbahadur motif in Maratha murals otherwise the presence of picture of Laila-Majnuh amidst the religious themes depicted on the walls of

Shiva temple (Someshwara) at Pashan could not be explained. Nayak-Nayika themes are not quite common. However, the murals of Motibag display a few which include, a bathing Nayika, a Nayika after bath, a Nayika near a lotus pond, Nayak-Nayika in a garden etc. Nayikas playing phugadi and yoyo. A bathing Nayika appears in the murals of Menawalikar Wada too. While the Krishnalila murals of Rangamaharaj at Nipani show the participants as 'Nayak' and 'Nayika'. The females seated in the windows of Krishna's palace are shown in different moods and postures. The depiction of the eternal lovers 'Radha and Krishna' appear in Maratha murals, but it has been executed in a manner which could not be called very subtle or fine. The most common motif that frequently occur is Krishna holding two Gopis on either of his sides. The murals of Jagatguru math, Nasik and from the walls of a private house Chandori, display Radha and Krishna in erotic postures. The presentation of the theme tends to betray a certain folk element as the action is depicted in too direct a manner. The murals of Ranga-maharaj of Nipani however depict Radha and Krishna as Nayak and Nayika engrossed in amorous acts, but here the depictions possess some sophistication and fineness.

Under general subjects, the game of phugadi which is a popular game of the region frequently appears. The pictures of this theme either depict two females playing the game or Radha and Krishna engrossed in the play in the

centre of the circle constituted by gopis in the Rashalila depictions. The theme is treated more or less in a conventional manner, as mostly the players are placed on a 'kamalasana' which is totally impractical thing in a fast game like Phugadi.

Sometimes, various items from a single painting are lifted and depicted as separate motifs by Maratha artists. Such motifs were mostly derived from some famous miniatures. At Pashan on the walls of Someshwara temple motifs like a hawk attacking a crane, Laila and Majnuh, dancing peacocks, hunting scenes are depicted in separate panels. It is interesting to find that all these motifs appear in one famous painting of Hyderabad School titled as ' Salabatjung returning from bird shooting'.⁵

Portraiture in the real sense as such are very few in the Maratha murals. The paintings depicting meeting of three historical persons mentioned earlier. An equestrian royal figure occurs in the murals of number of places. The equestrian figure holding a spear in one of it's hands, from the facade of Jagatguru Math Nasik is quite identical with the famous miniature portrait of Peshwa Bajirao I preserved in the Collection of Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, Pune. Two murals of Dabhade Wada also depict bust portraits of two royal figures seated together. The headgears of both the figures are of different types

hence it could be said that the figure wearing Peshwai pagadi could be of Peshwa Bajirao I, while the figure seated at the rear of the Peshwa and wearing a turban could be identified as the Maratha general Khanderao Dabhade, whose mansion this was. These two persons were on good terms with each other to begin with and carried out many expeditions jointly.

The floral and decorative designs appearing in Maratha murals are clearly borrowed from the north Indian schools.

The above discussion would make it clear that in the matter of religious themes the Maratha artists had inherited a strong tradition and this tradition had many things in common with the artistic traditions of South India. The impact of North Indian especially Rajasthani art is to be found mainly in the varied representations of Krishnalila. In the field of secular and decorative art, the debt that Maratha artists owed to Northern India is far greater and is almost certainly due to the influx of North Indian artists during the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

L A Y O U T :-

The paintings under discussion are executed on the walls and other contingent parts of a structure and as such they can be considered as a part and parcel of the general scheme of architecture. Their main purpose thus is to embellish the structures. At the same time, one cannot forget that they are an expression of the art of the 'painter' / 'artists', and have to be examined and appreciated as such. A study of murals, therefore, would involve a twofold approach. First, in relation to the structures and second, perhaps more important, their place in the history of painting.

The overall position of these paintings and their decorative effect would be better understood if a clear idea of the locations of the murals is obtained. As already mentioned structures of both the types, civil as well as religious have utilized mural decoration. Thus we have palaces and mansions of the ruling aristocratic classes, as well as temples and monasteries. Although the purpose of these structures varies their method of construction and consequently their general appearance is not too dissimilar. In the civil structures use has been made of brick and timber and the method of construction is uniform throughout. In the present context the main feature resulting from the method of construction is the existence of a number of

rectangular wall surfaces. More often than not we have a long horizontal row of such rectangles. As and when required doors or windows were placed in the centre of each. It was a common fashion to introduce false arches in low relief in stucco, within these rectangular spaces. Rows of such rectangular frames, formed the ground on which the artists wielded their brush. According to the position of the wall (inside wall or facade) the scheme of paintings would undergo certain changes.

The temples were constructed of brick and stone masonry and used extensively arches and domes. This extensive use of arches resulted in a number of surfaces like the spandrels, squinches, the drum of the dome and finally the dome of the ceiling itself. In case arches in relief were used, wall surfaces enclosed within these arches (tympana) supply yet another surface to be decorated. The shikharas of the temples are also sometimes painted either with purely decorative or thematic paintings. A detailed discussion of each of these features is given below. It should be emphasized here that an examination and appreciation of individual paintings or motifs alone would not enable one to do proper justice to any mural work. For, unlike miniature paintings which have a separate and individual existence and which are complete in themselves, murals have a collective existence or purpose. An

appreciation of the opportunity which this collective purpose opens up and the limitations which it puts on the artists is quite necessary in the proper understanding of the art of mural painting.

Below is presented a description of the specific location and nature of Maratha murals.

Facade :-

The facades of mansions exhibit a uniform pattern. Colour work is executed on the wall of the upper storey while the walls of the lower storey are left bare. It is equally likely that the paintings of the lower storey have now disappeared due to human agency but the chances are quite remote. Generally it is only the upper storey which seems to have been painted. This upper storey is a long horizontal band, divided into smaller panels by wooden pillars placed at regular intervals. In the centre of each rectangle was a window. More often than not these had stucco arches in low relief around them. The portions on extreme ends had no arches but like the others they also had stucco arches in low relief as their decoration. The surface enclosed within the pilaster and the false arch, is treated as a single frame. The space above the window enclosed by the upper portion of the arch is utilized for the representation of the more important themes. While the space

on either side of the window was used for minor subjects and motifs.

In a solitary example the parapets of the ramparts of the castle have been painted over. This was the castle of the Naik Nimbalkars at Wathar.

In case the entire facade is not so treated the upper portion of the entrance is often used for painting the figures of Ganesh.

Al^l most as a rule the wall surface was covered with crimson and then paintings in different colours executed. Due to weather effects practically in all extant examples all colours except white have faded giving an impression that the facade was a bichrome affair^s. The use of floral borders, motifs like the guldastas or cypress trees were employed to add to the decorative effect.

Walls - External :-

Apart from the facade, whenever the out^eer surface of the other walls, for example those opening out in the quadrangles, have to be decorated the same methods and motifs were used. Walls facing the courtyards are similarly decorated.

Interior :-

In the mansions itself only certain portions were

selected for colour ornamentation. The walls of the halls like the sadar, durbar-hall or rangmahal or bed-chamber were inevitably painted. In a few instances rooms were converted into sort of picture galleries. In all these cases the arrangement of the murals followed the same general pattern. A dado about a meter high was left blank and the upper portion was treated with paintings. In case there were cornices these too were decorated with paintings. The rectangular panels thus serve as a single frame which is utilized for painting either a narrative theme or some iconic picture. A slightly complicating or assisting element was introduced by the typical arrangement of niches of various sizes in the walls. These alcoved walls were the order of the day especially in the latter half of the eighteenth century. If such niches in relief are not introduced, the artists have themselves divided the wall surface into so many small panels. Many of these are enclosed in the shape of an arch so as to make them resemble the niches. For this division of the wall surface floral bands resembling the Hashias of the miniatures are used, apart from providing proper ground for smaller and more manageable motifs. This arrangement introduced an element of order and cohesion in the entire wall surface. The artist thus obtained much smaller frames and was able to introduce miniature-type paintings in them.

The lay-out of the painting of the walls of temples was practically the same, wherever flat wall surfaces resembling those in mansions were available, large compositions were introduced. More especially the interior of the Nandi Mandapa followed the same pattern of alcoved walls (Pandeshwar and Pal.). But most of the temples have got arches and domes as such the treatment had to be adjusted to these features. The mandapas and cells of the verandahs were treated with paintings. Here too it is noteworthy that only the upper portions of the walls, cornice and ceilings were painted, while the lower portion usually up to a height of one to one and a half meters was left blank. The upper portions of walls enclosed by arches in relief (tympana) were used as stated above, for the depiction of a single themes like samudra manthan or Draupadi-svayamvara. The squinches were used for the depiction of large figures of Sadhus. The surfaces of the octogonal drum were used for the painting of the ten incarnations or some other traditional theme.

Ceilings :-

The ceilings were elaborately decorated. Generally either a flat surface constituted the ceiling or ^{the former} they were ceilings. Sported designs in relief cut in timber. These consisted of diaper patterns. In both the case the ceilings

were enriched with the help of bright colours. The beautiful ceilings of the durbar-halls as a Motibag and Raste wada at Wai or the Nimbalkar wada at Wathar have glamorous diaper patterns executed against red, green or yellow backgrounds. However the ceilings of the temples are more interesting. While the ceiling of the halls are rectangular the ceiling of the temples are mostly circular though rectangular. Ceilings are not altogether absent in the temples. The ceilings of the halls of the civil structures display a few traditional floral patterns. But this is not the case with the ceilings of the temples. They show various floral motifs as well as thematic paintings. In the Someshwara temple (Pashan) and in the temple of Kirkee, the scheme consists of a number of concentric bands. Such ceilings in the Someshwara temple and the Harinarayan Math (Benawadi) display floral motifs interspered with cranes, fish etc. The ceiling of Kirkee temple shows, Krishnalila themes, episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The ceiling of the painted cell of Morgaon temple bears concentric bands that depicts scenes from the Ganeshpurana.

Cornice :-

Cornice bands are discussed separately as they present problems of their own. At a few places paintings executed on the cornice have remained intact. The places which possess mural decoration on the cornice are Motibag

(Wai), Meneshwara temple (Menawali), Belbag temple (Pune) etc. Usually the cornice provides a narrow stripe as the ground for painting, hence the whole stripe was divided into small rectangular panels and each rectangle displayed separate themes. Due to the small size of the surface, the paintings were obviously small in size and can be called 'mural miniatures'. Green, red, yellow, blue and white colours and sometimes their pastel shades have been used for the background in these panels. Each panel possess a different colour for the background hence two panels appear distinct. This type of distribution of the colours thus breaks the monotony of the narrow long stripe. In the Meneshwara temple at Menawali instead of small rectangles the stripe is divided into small horizontal arched frames which enclose one theme each. The remaining space outside the frames is filled with decorative motifs of peacocks, cranes and such other birds. Normally this space provides room for only a few figures. However the painting of the Meneshwar temple display a good number of figures, architectural structures etc.

As the painting on the cornice are small in size and located at a fairly good height it is difficult to appreciate their beauty. They practically serve as space - fillers in the scheme of the painting. In the Someshwara temple at Pashan and in the Monastery of Harinarayan Swami at Benawadi, paintings are done on the drum of the dome.

In the Pashan temple the paintings are executed on the stripe but themes are not separated from each other and are done on a common background.

Shikhara :-

It seems it was a common practice to have colourwork on the Shikharas but as this part of the structure was open to climatic effects most of the work has disappeared. Fragmentary remains speak of the existence of colour work. At Palⁱ in the temple of Khandoba, considerable work is still intact and gives us an idea of the paintings. A few temples including the Yamai temple at Aundh also show thematic pictures on the Shikharas.

The Shikharas generally have niches that are decorated with thematic painting and stucco figures which are also painted. The colour work of this portion of the temple not only makes in shikharas colourful and decorative but also acquaint the masses who gather in the temple at the time of temple festival in a large number, with Hindu mythology.

The interior chamber of the shikhara of Khandoba temple at Pal also contains mural work. To reach the interior of this shikhara is not easy as there is no staircase to go upstairs. It is dark inside and thus it is difficult to understand why paintings are done in such a place where the

work could hardly be seen by the people. This interior chamber has six sides and on the wall surfaces of the six sides large-sized single figures of Pandawas, Draupadi, Kichak, Kunti etc. are depicted the small Mandapa in front of the interior of the Shikhara also has colour decoration on its four walls.

A few points that emerge from the above discussion of the paintings vis-a-vis their location can be enumerated now. Very generally speaking, the artist was concerned more with the effect of the whole rather than that of individual pictures. What he was aiming at was a vast display of bright colours used to delineate certain themes and motifs that would enliven the whole atmosphere, the connection between the walls, the ceilings and the individual pictures was thus a very real one. This relationship governed both the conception or visualisation or the entire decorative aspect as well as the execution of individual pictures. The Maratha artist can be said to have understood this interrelationship very well and produced work that were remarkable for their overall effect.

How and to what extent the location of the paintings governed their composition is considered in the next section. It would become obvious in due course that this accent on total effect by no means served as an obstacle to the adoption and evolution of beautiful individual

schemes of composition and some very fine workmanship in the execution of individual themes and figures.

COMPOSITION : -

As stated above, of the various factors that govern the composition of the murals, the location of each painting is perhaps the most important one. For, the place of the piece in the general scheme of things determines to a large extent not only the subject matter but also the method of its expression i.e. the composition. A few broad categories can be envisaged, pictures painted over large wall spaces, those painted on much smaller and hence more manageable frames and those on ceilings, especially domical ceilings.

The paintings of the first category (walls of the facade, upper portions of rectangular walls or on the tympana, upper portions of walls enclosed within arches) are usually of a narrative nature like those of Samudra-manthana, Draupadi-swayamvara, Gopi-vastraharana and so on. Such representations have the accent on the centre. Either the mountain Meru (used to churn the sea) or Arjuna shooting his arrow or a large tree with Krishna (holding the garments of the helpless gopies in his hand) on its top form the centre-piece. On either side are arranged other figures. Most of these representations contain very few figures and it is quite evident that the artist is struggling hard to offset the 'vac^cuum'. Introduction of a number of less related figures (from the thematic point

of view) in a sort of second tier as at Benawadi, or dotting the empty space with totally unrelated figures and motifs (as at Pandeshwar) is the normal way out. Even then the feeling that the picture is loosely knit, has more space than the artist is in a position to cover or tackle remains. It is only the bright colours used that come to the rescue. The use of natural or artificial i.e. architectural backgrounds is less frequent in such compositions. Whenever these items appear they are represented in such a sketchy manner that their presence does not always help in presenting balanced composition. Why such elements were not given importance can not be said, perhaps it was because of the predominance of local folk tradition of mural decoration. In case the frames are rectangular or square, as seen at Wai or Satara, the accent is on the centre, the figures are generally small and loosely spread over, but one thing is noteworthy, their number has increased and they have been placed in such a manner that the empty space becomes much less conspicuous. Two instances are remarkable. At Satara in a Rangapanchami scene splashes of bright colours (apparently sprinkled over each other by the revellers) fill up the entire space. At Wai (Patwardhan wada) a large number of figures are arranged in a patterned design of concentric squares. Such large surfaces are more often utilised for depiction of individual figures or groups of figures that can best be

termed ' family groups'. Here the figures are large, quite often only a single figure occupying a frame a quarter meter square (new-Palace, Satara). In the alternative, groups of deities like Ramapanchayatana, Ganapati with Riddhi and Siddhi, Lakshmi-Narayan with Garuda etc. are seen

The figures in the first variety are small not very well drawn, depending on colour rather than draftsmanship on ^{their} ~~it's~~ effects. Here they are generally executed against a red background. In the square rectangular variety the background is white, but figures are large, bold and outlines are very well-done. Facial ^{features} figures are also beautifully modelled in most cases (New-Palace, Satara)(Dev wada, Wai).

The division of the wall space in so many alcoves or panels (shaped like alcoves) has a two-fold effect. First, visually it presents a very well arranged and disciplined surface for the onlooker to witness. The delicately executed bands of creeper and floral designs that divide the whole surface lend a certain grace to the orderly arrangement. Far greater in importance however is its other effect. It presents the artists with far more manageable frames to work on. The niches or arched panels were much smaller in size (half a meter by one third of a meter in general) than the ones in the first category. Without much effort the artist could reproduce here themes and compositions with which he was familiar although the

medium differed. A slight enlargement of the miniatures with which they were familiar was the only thing required. A large majority of paintings from the better class work as at Chandwad, Nipani, Wai, Wathar etc. falls in this category.

Apart from depiction of gods and goddesses, such themes as durbars, royalty at ^eli~~s~~ure, meeting of diplomats, prince on a well, Ragamala or Krishnalila, were painted in these frames. ~~As~~ ⁱⁿ miniatures the subject was set against a conventional background of trees or mansions with a thin skyline above. In the foreground patterned gardens with small ponds in them appear. So do rivers and streams. The entire draftsmanship is precise, the modelling of the buildings, trees, hills and especially the human figures follows the 'miniature' prototype closely. The human figures are small, very well drawn and the facial features are in most cases handsome. The miniature psychology is so predominant here that in some cases (as at Wathar) the artist has even used gold. All these paintings are executed on walls that are covered with red (geru) and burnished. The very smooth surface thus obtained has enabled the artist to indulge in fine workmanship especially linework. Since in most cases the colours have faded, the impact of colour on the scheme of composition cannot be properly evaluated. In the larger murals, bright

and contrasting colours were more welcome, in the miniature like murals bright but harmonious colour-schemes seem to have been the order of the day.

Exceptions to these two general schemes are obviously there. Depiction of loose figures of a large-size without reference to any preconceived plan or scheme is not infrequent especially on the outer wall surfaces. Large figures of soldiers, gods, goddess or guldastas occur at various places. In most cases their colours have faded and today what one sees is figures in white on a red surface (Nana wada, Pune, Jagatguru Math, Nasik etc.) The niches in the walls were used as the painting surfaces and normally each niche displayed a separate theme. However, the niche groups or alcoves were used to depict a single theme. Instead of each niche having a different theme, the central or larger one would contain the main figures, especially those of gods and goddesses. The smaller niche around this were used to paint figures of attendants - Chauri - bears or subsidiary figures like those of Riddhi and Siddhi. Thus the entire group of niches would in reality be a single composition inspite of the formal division of the components.

At Nipani the most significant departure occurs. Here the large rectangular upper portion of the walls present a beautiful panorama of innumerable human figures, mostly female, set against a vast architectural background. Each

of the frames that are intact today displays a detailed representation of a typical Maratha structure, complete down to timber pillars, capitals and brackets. Within the arched windows, near the pillars or in the projecting balconies are female figures in every conceivable posture, each drawn with consummate skill. All are clad in nine yards. Marathi Sadis. It is an extremely pleasing and harmonious colour-scheme that finds here. This sort of a combination of the mural and the miniature technique or approach is practically unique and the only other example connected with the Maratha artists is at ^{Baxoda} ~~Baroda~~ (Tambekar Haveli murals). The paintings there are, however, much later in date than these. Thus the Nipani murals have to be treated as a class by themselves.

Before turning to the domical ceilings, it would be necessary to dwell on the display of floral motifs or 'guldastas', in the Naik Nimbalkar mansion at Wathar. In the uppermost portion of the wall beautiful arches alcoves are carved in low relief. On either ends are painted patterns with beautiful guldastas within the frames.

A word about the source from which the scheme of alcoves was adopted is now necessary. In most of all Rajasthani structures of contemporary date the same scheme prevails, it was equally popular in the architecture of the Mughals. Nearer home the Adilshahi structures display

similar arrangement though not as prominently. It would be therefore logical to suppose that this scheme and the layout and compositions associated with it were derived from Northern India, probably Rajasthan via Malwa. The costume of the figures appearing in category two is quite often Rajasthani and this would seem to support the above suggestion.

The paintings on the ceiling fall in a class by themselves. If rectangular or square they utilised repeat patterns, usually diaper, based on geometric constructions. The ceilings were often in timber and the whole was an exercise in joinery. Small pieces were fitted together and then painted over with bright shades of red, green and yellow.

The domical ceilings follow a set pattern, in the centre is a large circle containing a rosette or lotus flower. Around are a number of concentric bands containing floral motifs of human figures as described earlier. At Moregaon, the dome of the ceiling is quite flat and here the space is square which encloses a circle. The figures are arranged in the space inside the circle as well as outside the circle that is in the space between the outer outline of the circle and the space inside the square.

The nature of the composition of Maratha murals

and their relationship with their location must be quite obvious by now. Other details are taken up for discussion in the following sections.

HUMAN FIGURE :-

The human figure appearing in Maratha murals is so varied that it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate or pin-point a particular type as characteristic of the region or the period. However, some broad features could be noted. Following the composition, two figure types are discernible, the first one going with large-sized murals, the other with miniature-type murals.

The figures in the first category are large in size, they tend to be short and stocky. The head is slightly bigger in proportion to the body, the shoulders bigger than the rest of the body and the uppermost ^{Pant} is often bigger in comparison with the lower. Feet are usually very small. Almost as a rule they are in profile, wherever there is an exception as in the case of Shiva figures, the artist is found to be out of his depth. The faces are generally handsome with a slightly sloping forehead, a straight nose, thin lips and the chin drawn slightly in. Eyes are long but broad. The hairlines are pushed back. The execution of this figure type or modifications in it depend on the individual artist. For example the figures on the Khandoba temple at 'Pal' in Satara district or the ones on the Nana wada at Pune follow roughly the same proportions but their draftsmanship is crude. This ineptitude is usually betrayed in the

delineation of the figures and toes as well as facial features like the nose and the eyes. The figures in the palace of Satara on the other hand, are remarkable for their delicate features and pleasant expression. The artist has depicted some very young and handsome faces. The bodily proportions do not show any improvement.

Slightly smaller figures as in one painting in the Wathar house, Dea's house at Wai or some of the Satara palace, show the same characteristics.

In both the cases, vigorous and forceful linework and young faces with pleasant expressions are the hallmark of human figures of this category.

The other category i.e. of the miniature type has a far greater, bewildering variety. Here too, the human figure its proportions and facial features are constants, but the actual depictions differ from place to place. Rang Mahal, Chandwad, Rang Mahal and Durbar Hall in the Nipankar's Wada at Nipani, Dabhade wada, Talegaon, Motibag, Patwardhan wada, Wai, Durbar Hall of the Naik-Nimbalkar wada, Wathar, and the Belbag temple, Pune. Of these, the ones in the Nipani palace are a class by themselves and discussed slightly later on. Of the rest, the figures in the Wathar and Chandwad mansions are qualitatively superior. Not only are they delicately delineated but they

are quite lively and often vigorous. Figures at Motibag are of the same general type but lack the tenderness which marks the Wathat^W or Chandwad figures. The figures in the Patwardhan wada present a slight ^{exception} ~~expression~~ in that the figures are thin and tall or are elongated. Their outlines are more a result of stroke-work rather than a continuously flowing line. The Nipani figures have the most proportionate anatomy and reveal an attempt at realistic modelling, apart from delicate, even beautiful faces. Still more noteworthy is the wide range of posture they present. As stated earlier, these figures are shown in various places, looking out ^{of} all _L the windows reclining against a balustrade or a pillar and so on. This gives the artist an opportunity of depicting every conceivable ^V posture - sitting, standing, kneeling, standing with the weight on one leg the other bent, turning and twisting. And it has to be pointed out that without exception these figures are extremely graceful - the flow of the line is enchanting. Free and forceful movement mark all the figures.

Figures in the second group are very close to the ones in contemporary miniatures and reflect all the good point and the weakness of the former.

In conclusion it can be stated that all the Maratha murals utilized a common figure type which was subject to qualitative variations in it's rendering. This

figure type was the result of two independant factors or forces. The beginning of the eighteenth century, that is the beginnings of the revival of the art of mural painting in this region also saw a great influence^x of artists from Northern India into Maharashtra. These were patronised by a number of noblemen who had come into closer contact with that region and developed a taste for that type of work. The handiwork of the local artists was no doubt influenced by these artists. However, it is evident that the local artists had inherited an indigenous style and the works of the latter half of the eighteenth century exhibit the two side by side purely Rajasthani works and the Maratha works - an admixture of Rajasthani and local features.

The resulting Maratha works are characterised by simple stroke work, curvilinear sweeps of the brush both marked by refreshing force and vigour.

COSTUME :-

Costumes of ancient origin as well of the then contemporary fashion both could be seen in Maratha murals. These are generally in keeping with the position of the individual.

The main male deities from the mythological subject matter are shown dressed in the costume of ancient origin. This type of dress mostly consists of dhoti, ^{uttariya} and a crown over the head. The upper part of the ^{torso} ~~forso~~ is bare. The figures of the secular themes as well as the figures of secondary or minor deities wear costumes common amongst contemporary Maratha or Rajput nobility. These dresses mostly consist of following items as the upper garment - long and fully pleated angarkha, short angarkha but fully pleated or ^agherdar, short coat with stiff ends. The lower garment consist of tight payjama, payjama which comes just below the knee and locally known as 'Mandcholana', Pant, shorts and dhoti. Around the waist the figures tie a dupatta or ^ashash. Sometimes an ^auttariya is also thrown over the shoulders of the figures. A pagadi or turban serve as the headgear.

The costume of ^{The} first type could be seen, worn by the deities, in the sculptures and paintings of all the regions. The Mukuta of the South-Indian, Karandaka type (pyramidal) is quite common place whereas the three-pieced

crown so common in Rajasthani, especially Pahari miniatures does not occur frequently and only at Wathar (Naik Nimbalkar wada) and at Pandeshwara (Pandeshwara Mandir) this type could be seen. The preference for the South Indian type crowns shows the dominance of South Indian tradition in some of the items occurring in Maratha murals. ~~in remarkable.~~

The influence of fashions of costumes from contemporary courts, especially of the Northern courts, is quite evident in the dress-styles which appear in the secular scenes. Kings and noblemen are mostly dressed in long fully pleated angarkhas which completely hide their feet. This type of angarkha became widely popular among the royalty and nobility of the prominent courts which include, Mughal, Rajasthani and Deccani courts, from the eighteenth century. The ^aelaborately embroidered sash was also a very popular item of this period. In the headgears, Rajasthani, Mughal and Deccani varieties appear at few places. However, the most commonly occurring ^{गज}headgear is the Peshwai pagadi which is ^alocal variety and associated with the Peshwas. In the mythological scenes secondary figures generally wear this type. It is interesting to note that the picture depicting Parushrama fighting with Sahasrarjuna, shows Parushrama with a crown on his head while Sahasrarjuna has a Peshwai Pagadi. Retainers and

servants wear a turban of the Deccani-Muslim fashion. The pagadis are elaborately decorated with brooches, pearls and other ornaments. The angarkha^s are transparent and sometimes patterned with dots and crosses.

The figures of attendants^a or dwarpalas which appear on either side of the entrance are typically dressed. These figures wear a long gherdar angarkha, have dupatta over the shoulder and tie an elaborate sash around the waist. In the waist-band they keep^a decorative dagger. As the headgear these figures universally wear a loosely wound type of turban decorated with broaches and ornaments. The attendants from the wall paintings of the Rama-Mandir at Wathar wear a long dotted angarkha which ~~have~~^{has a} frill at the end on the calfs and on the sleeves. However, the costumes of two of the attendants from the wall painting of Nanawada (Pune) are quite fanciful. One of them wear a Mandcholana and a short coat over which he again wears a waistcoat having frilled collar and frilled short sleeves. As the headgear he has a loosely wound type of turban. The dress of the other attendant is also similar to that of first one^{but} with a slight difference. The lower garment of this figure is knee length. His frilled coat has many pleates and may be termed as^a frock coat. He wears a hat of European fashion on his head.

In the pictures of battle scenes the ^awarriors are shown wearing armours over their body and helmets on the heads. In such scenes a few figures appear dressed in the costume of European soldiers.

The cowherds and farmers wear dhoti or loin cloth as the lower garment and cover their heads with a black coloured coarse blanket locally known as 'ghongadi' (घोंगडी).

Female Attire :-

Females more especially in religious themes are shown in the typical Maharashtrian costume, consisting of a nine yard ^{sadi}sadi and a short choli. The heads are covered with the pallav of the ^{sadi}sadi. Both the ~~sadi~~ and the choli have brocaded borders and the pallav of the ^{sadi}sadi are broad and brocaded in gold. The ~~sadi~~ ^{sadi}sadis are patterned with dots and crosses. The female figures of the Ragmala pictures and of a few 'genre' scenes are dressed in a ghagra (skirt) a choli (bodice) and a dupatta, in the North Indian fashion. The dancers and the heroines of romantic stories like those of Rupmati-Bazbahadur, Laila and Majnuⁿ and Nayikas, wear a long fully pleated ^{a e}transparent full-sleeved angarkha which has ^{an}opening at the front. As the lower garment they wear a tight payjama. They tie a waist-band or dupatta around the waist and wear odhani over the head. Dancers have in addition a long garland of flowers around

their necks.

Ornaments and Coiffure :-

Both male and female figures of our murals wear ample jewellery and ornaments. The style of the ornaments is not much different from the style of ornaments of contemporary North India.

In the female jewellery following items are prominent. Necklace, several strings of pearls, Bangles (काकरी), armlet (बाजूबंद), Anklet (पैजण), earrings (चुम्का, बाढी, बुगडी, मकरकुंडल). They decorate their coiffure with pendants (बिंदी) adorning the forehead, besides this golden rose (गुलाब फूल), ornaments having shape of a ^{of the} Crescent Moon (चंद्र) and Sun (सूर्य), a conical golden ornament known as mood (मूद) are also included in the ornaments decorating the hair style. The pigtails of the females are decorated with pompoms. However the most popular hairstyle, that is 'Khopa' is commonly found in the Maratha murals and is ornamented with the above mentioned ornaments.

LANDSCAPE : -

Themes requiring natural surroundings have ^{two} types of landscape. In the first type the figures are placed against a monochrome background over which grass tufts are scattered. The surface is not always flat. Land elevation is suggested by horizontal thick lines at proper interval. Sometimes this surface also has flower sprays or a tree here or there. A thin stripe beyond the top of the land-mass represents the sky which is painted blue and has a few clouds scattered over it.

The second type is a greater elaboration of the first. There the surface is divided into three parts. In the middle portion, figures are placed while the upper part and lower part are treated as the background and the foreground, respectively. In the foreground either plain land is shown with flower spray spread over or there appears a thin stripe of water, with aquatic creatures. In the portion which serves as the background, low hills are generally shown. Sometimes the land-mass is depicted as a semicircular horizontal form. The hills or the hillocks or the land elevation serve as the horizontal baseline for a row of trees. In between the trees, a small representation of a palace, temple or pavillion is not uncommon. In the wall paintings of Phadanvis wada (Menawali) a number of structures simulating a city in the far distance are shown. The sky is always overcast with clouds. The sky in the

paintings from Phadanvis wada has red strokes in the colour area filled with ^{nu}purssian blue and white.

Trees :-

Different but highly stylized tree-forms occur in the Maratha murals. Among the tree forms, plantain, cypress, mango, weeping willow, coconut etc. could be recognized. Other tree forms appearing are of decorative type. A semicircular form is first painted over the top of ^atall trunks. This area is then distributed into roughly circular forms in imitation of bunches of leaves. In these circle the leaves are often arranged like flower petals, ~~as well~~ sometimes in the centre of this leaf arrangement a flower or in case of the mango tree a mango is placed. Another type of tree commonly found in Maratha murals has ~~leave~~ ^fleaf arrangement in small equal semicircular forms which are outlined by a large semicircular form.

Flower sprays with flowers and decorative leaves are used as space fillers. The treatment of the landscape and of the items appearing in it are not different from those occuring in the miniatures of North India but in the Maratha murals the treatment of these, looks quite sketchy.

Architectural forms :-

Architecture is used principally as an indication of locale. Depiction of themes which are connected with the

palace-life or home-life generally have architectural settings. Beside these scenes in the open country also have representation of small single structures of a temple or of a mansion in the distant background. In the wall paintings of Phadanvis wada (Menawali) a group of small building structures is shown^{so} as to suggest a distant view of city.

In the episodes which show life of the interior, the arrangement of the building is of three types. In this context one thing should be noted that the structures are usually depicted in the horizontal middle portion of the picture where the main action takes place.

In the first type of it a flat roofed pavillion or a multistoreyed building is shown either on the right hand side or On the left hand side of the group of figures. figures are placed in the verandah, windows, arched openings in the buildings and also on the terraces (Dabhade wada). In the foreground flower beds with fountains in between are depicted.

A detailed representation of this type occur in one of the paintings at Dabhade wada. The painting shows a multi²storeyed palace on the right hand side of the picture. (a number of figures are placed in the windows, doors and v^erandah of the palace). This palace and it's courtyard are encircled by a fortification. The courtyard which depicts

a wrestling bout has a planned garden with flower beds and fountains. In the distance amidst a number of trees there appears a small mansion.

In the second type two equal sized and shaped portions of single-storeyed or double storeyed buildings are shown, on either hand. The figures are placed on the terrace of these structures, flower-beds and fountains are depicted in the foreground.

In the third type almost all the middle space is occupied by a multi storeyed building. The main drama is shown in front of the building while, windows, doors and verandah of the building show either portraits^{busts} of the figures or depict them in various postures.

As mentioned earlier temples, single storeyed pavilions, multi-storeyed mansions or palaces appear in the Maratha murals.

Temples are usually shown with a dome or as a single storeyed pavilion. Sometimes the entrance to the temple is plain while it is arched in some cases. The temples are usually depicted in front elevation. A birds eye view is also found (Motibag). However, the perspective which is attempted lacks the realism.

Flat roofed single structures are also shown in their front view and rarely they are depicted in bird's eye

view (Motibag). This construction has a pavilⁱon on a low plinth. The parap^ets are decorated with decorative motifs. The entrances are arched. Sometimes projecting windows appear in such type of structures. Generally half the portion of such buildings is shown either on the left hand side or on the right hand side of the picture.

Multi-storeyed buildings have verandahs on the ground floor which has a number of arches (The main figures are placed in these arches or in^ffront of the arches). The upper-storey^es have a row of arch-shaped windows (These portions also show figures in the empty space)^{and} on the top of the buildings ^{are} have a observation posts. The parap^ets are decorated with motifs. It is frontally represented. In the wall painting of Dabhade wada portions of building are shown attached with a wall shown in perspective.

Wall paintings of the Rangamahar (Nipani) display very elaborate type of multi storeyed buildings. The buildings in these painting not only show verandah but also doors which are visible through the verandah. Doors have rolled up curtains. The projected windows at certain intervals are very decorative. These buildings are in front elevation. These representations are extremely faithful copies of contemporary structures. Apart from the ^{or} curvilinear roofs of the balconies and the beautiful arches and arched-windows, some minute details like timber posts and the carved

brackets thereon are also seen. Like the costumes, the architectural representations reflect contemporary Maratha fashions most faithfully.

Animals and Birds :-

The figures of animals and birds are as sure an index to the artists' observation and ability as the human figure. Apart from faithful representation of the physiognomy of the animal or the bird, the expression of the movement becomes a sure test to the skill of the painters. The number of animals appearing in our murals is limited ; elephant, horse, tiger, deer, dog, cow and camel amongst the quadrupeds, fish crocodile and tortoise among the aquatic creatures and peacocks, parrots, cranes and hawks among the birds. These appear either as the vahanas of some god or goddess, as participants ⁱⁿ of a mythological tale, but more often in processions, battle or hunting scenes. The crocodile, tortoise, tiger, camel are depicted in the most clumsy possible manner. The elephant and deer are as a rule graceful, their movements and the force of the one and the ~~space~~ of the other are rendered most convincingly. The horse, though most common-place has not been done justice to by our artists. The depiction of horse ^{varies} between ^{the} most graceful as in the Rupamati ' Baj-Bajbahadur' painting at Wai (Motibag) and the battle scene at Pashan (Someshwara)

to the most tordy as in various depictions at Wai and Satara. Parrots used as ~~the~~ space filler-motifs are fairly convincing the peacock is not. This paragraph cannot be concluded without a reference to an unusually expressive picture of a hawk attacking a crane (Pashan.) The fury of the attack and the helplessness of the victim are rendered in a manner that would do credit to the best artist at any time and at any place.

INSIGNIA AND FURNITURE : -

Maratha murals show a few items of insignia and furniture which consist of thrones low chakis or low tables, kamalasanas, palanquins chhatras, morchels, abadagirs, chauris etc. Among these some items are noteworthy.

Thrones :-

Normally the important deities are shown seated on a high throne in the shape of sandclock. This is extremely ornamental. This throne is made up of two lotus shaped parts, on both are carved ~~the~~^a petals of ~~the~~^a lotus. A chhatra is generally attached to the throne. The painting depicting Ramapanchayatan at Patwardhan wada, besides the attached chhatra shows arch shaped form, inside which Sita, the female counterpart of Rama is shown. This type of throne most frequently occurs in South Indiaⁿ painting. ^{on} The wall painting from Phadanvis wada- (Menawali) a very unusual type appears. Here Krishna is seated with ~~the~~^a Asthanayikas in a pavil~~i~~on-like seat which obviously is quite spacious and has low legs and has a roof placed on thin simple pillars or sticks. The roof has diaper pattern on it. Under it glass chandelliers are hanging. Next to the ' sandclock' throne the most commonly found seats are the low stools. They serve as the seats for the deities. It has a hexagonal shape and it's top is bordered with lotus petals. This seat also has elaborate ornamentation.

Kamalasana :-

Mostly in the mythological themes and sometimes even in the secular episodes, the deities, minor deities and even attendants or commoners are shown seated or standing on a Kamalasana. This has the shape of a lotus and as such is termed Kamalasana. To place a divine figure on a Kamalasana is a quite common practice in the sculpture from early times. In painting, this practice could be seen at Ajanta where the Buddha figure is placed on a Kamalasana. In South Indian wall paintings and in the miniature paintings of the mediaval period also Kamalasana appear, but in Maratha painting it is a matter of course, not of option. Its frequency is far greater than in any other school.

Chhatra :-

The chhatra, as stated above, ^{is} ~~are~~ shown above the heads of the deities. The chhatra is a highly ornate-umbrella made of valuable and colourful material.

Chairs :-

In some of the paintings ~~the~~ chairs known as 'Chengiskhani' chair appears. In the wall painting of 'Rangmahal' (Nipani) Krishna, at one place and at another place Narada is seated on such type of ^a chairs.

Palanquin :-

In the scene of processions this item appears. Usually a royal figure is shown seated inside it. In the procession scene from Dabhade wada a very interesting type of palanquin occurs. This palanquin, carried by four persons, has ^a hexagonal shape. The open part of it has the form ^{an} arch. However this is the type ^{that} ^s occurring in murals of ~~other~~ ^{various} regions, as well.

Abadagir :-

Royal figures are shown with abadgir, morchal, flywisks and bolsters, as these items show their higher status. Besides these, in the wall-painting at Satara there appears a colourful item attached to a long stick and carried by the attendants in the procession. It has a shape of an almond.

TECHNIQUE :-

For any understanding of the technique of wall painting of this period one has to turn to contemporary literature and to an examination of extant remains . Information gathered from persons who are still following the traditional methods helps in this discussion.

Broadly speaking technique would include the following factors. The carrier which supports the ground, the ground on which the paintings are executed, the pigments and their application and binding material.

The carrier :-

Walls built of stone, brick and mud (reinforced by bamboo) are to be found used for the Maratha mansions and they serve as the carrier for the mural work.

The ground :-

Normally two techniques were employed in Maratha murals. The first technique uses a dry ground painting while the second one utilizes a wet ' ground' for that purpose. The first technique is generally known as the ^etemp_Lra and the second is termed as fresco.

Dry Ground :-

This is the most widely used technique. The walls were covered either with mud plaster or with lime mortar

9. plaster. The thickness varied from place to place, although mud plaster tended to be more thick, - between three to five cms - as compared to lime plaster, casually 1/2 to 1 cm in thickness. The surface was made even and smooth. A plain wash of lime was first given and then the colours were applied. The Archaeological museum of Deccan College has preserved some fragments of wall paintings which give some idea about this type of plaster. These fragments show that the walls were built either of brick ^{or of} ~~of~~ bamboo frames with a very thick mud plaster. Over this surface a coat of plaster consisting of lime and sand was applied. Over this a slightly thick second coat of fine lime was laid. This final coat of plaster was white washed or painted with crimson red (geru) and used as the ground for the painting. Over the prepared surface the preliminary drawing was ~~dane~~ directly with the brush (usually in red). Although this method was more common, it seems that stencils were also used. The stencils were perforated and were transfered^r to the walls by sprinkling charcoal dust or geru powder on the stencils. The whole scheme of painting of the wall was well thought out as is evident from the key-sketches preserved in ^{the} Kolhapur museum. These sketches were obtained by the museum from the Patwardhan family of Tasgaon. The walls of ^P ~~patwardhan~~ mansion at Tasgaon ^{were} ~~was~~ covered with the murals although they are badly damaged today. On the

backside of some of the key sketches, their position on the wall has been noted down. This also shows that the artist first drew model sketched^{5/} on the paper and then enlarged them on the walls. This practice was quite common in other regions in the contemporary period.

Since in this technique there is no restriction on the nature of the colours to be used, all types of pigments - mineral, vegetable and synthetic could be used. The artist has a wide range of colours at his command. Various shades and tints of pigments could also be produced. Maratha artists have used all types of colours and their tints and shades, although their preference lay with primary colours.

In many cases the paintings done in this technique were varnished after the completion of the execution. However, this practice has marred the beauty of the original colours as the colours tend to get a yellowish effect due to varnish.

Wet Surface :-

In this technique the process of preparing the plaster and its application on the wall is very elaborate and all the stages of painting are executed while the plaster is wet. The process is somewhat as under.

Both stone and brick walls serve as 'carrier' for the plaster, prepared for this technique. First, the surface of the wall is made rough and over it a plaster consisting of superfine lime and marble dust is applied. After the application of plaster the surface is beaten with the help of a wooden thrive, for the proper setting of the plaster. A dilute solution of marble powder and Kali (lime) is applied on this plaster furnished with a piece of scrubber. On this prepared surface the required drawing is transferred while the surface is wet (in fact all the stages - drawing, colouring etc. are done while the plaster is wet). Requisite areas are then filled up with mineral colours, according to a preplanned colour scheme. For proper setting of the colours, the surface is again beaten with a ⁿ Mehla with light strokes. Finally outlines are done either in black or in burnt seinā. Coconut oil is then applied over the painting and ^{furnishing} ~~furnished~~ with an agate stone. This ~~furnishing~~ gives the painting ^{the} ~~an~~ effect of glazed tiles.

From the above description of this process it is quite evident that the process is very labourious and requires a special skill, since the painting is to be done on a wet surface, the artist^t has got a very limited time on hand. Consequently, it requires a greater degree of preplanning. Colour in the wet plaster, becomes practically one with it and consequently these paintings become more

durable than those executed on dry surface. Apart from durability, they acquire rich shining^{ing} effect and thereby become extremely attractive. Hence inspite of the fact that it was not very easy to get^{an} artist well-versed in this technique, some of the temples in Maharashtra preserve mural work done in this process. The main temples with the murals in this process are - Someshwara Mandir (Pashan), Pandeshwara Mandir (Pandeshwara), Harinarayan Swami Math (Benewadi) and Morgaon Mandir (Morgaon).

Binding Material :-

On account of the bad state of preservation of most of the murals it is difficult to detect which particular medium was used. However, it seems gum or glue was the most commonly used binding medium as it had a widespread prevalence in our period.

Colours / Pigments :-

As mentioned earlier most of the murals are not in a good state of preservation. The colours have faded, washed off or are peeled out due to the fragile plaster or on account of the effect of natural elements. Still there are enough specimens left intact to give us an idea about the pigments used.

The pigments used are those that were locally available as well as those imported from other regions.

Following are the colours which could be detected in Maratha murals.

Minerals :-

Geru (Red ochere)
Hermuji (Indian red)
Harital (orpiment)
Hingola (Bright red)

Organic :-

Neel (Indigo)
Mahavar or Alita (Lac)
Manashila (Brilliant red)

Chemical :-

Peoree (Indian yellow)
Sindur or Shendur (Red lead)
Kajal (Black soot)
Safeda or Kali (Zink white)

Beside these colours several shades and tints were used in the painting with the admixture of white black or any other colour with the above mentioned pigments. In some of the paintings gold and silver were also used.

The surface was generally given a wash either of

red or of white. This served as the colour for the ground or background of the painting. Red and white seems to be most favourite with artists of this period. These colours were also cheap and easily available in large quantity locally. However the use of other colours and their various shades and tints for the background was not altogether absent. Normally the pictures located on the cornice were executed against the pastel shades of various colours. The reasons for the use of pastel shades for the painting of this particular place was quite practical. This place received less light than the walls below or the ceiling above and hence light backgrounds were preferred. Besides the cornice wherever pictures were executed in the smaller frames, different hues of primary colours were used for the background along with red or white. At Chandwad we get light emerald green, blue, which was very favourite in the miniature painting of late ⁹Mughal School.

Colours were laid flat. However some shading was introduced to impart volume, to the figures and forms. At some places excessive shading has made ^{the} paintings too gaudy and crude. The colour-area was finally outlined either with a darker shade of the colour used for that area or with black. Sometimes over a darker outline black outline was drawn. This double colour shading was used as a means of modelling the figures.

The total effect of the painting is highly decorative and rich, on account of the predominance of primary colours.

Line :-

In accordance with Indian tradition, these wall paintings are also basically linear. The line varied in thickness from very fine to fairly thick. For example usually for smaller miniature like paintings as in the Motibag, very fine lines, as thin as a hair were used while the linework of the large sized murals as at Satara, Pune, Benawadi etc. have much thicker lines. The use of thicker and bold lines for pictures of a smaller size is not altogether absent.

(Moreshwara Mandir, Morgaon; Pandeshwara Mandir, Pandeshwara)

In the murals of Pandeshwar and Moregaon temples the line is found incised on the wet plaster. This inscribed line was filled with black colour. Today the black has mostly disappeared exposing the incised lines. Both the types of lines - continuous, flowing and short swift strokes are used by our artists. The larger paintings show the extensive use of stroke work while the smaller ones go in for fine continuous lines.

In accordance with contemporary practice the mural work was probably carried out by a group of artists. This fact is evident from the comparatively important portions

which must have done by the more skilled artists of the group while rest of the work was entrusted to their assistants.

E P I L O G U E :-

A detailed account of the murals surveyed and studied by the author has been presented in the preceding pages. From this account it would be evident that the Maratha land had nurtured the art of mural painting in a big way during the late medieval period. It has already been shown in section 1 that there existed a long unbroken tradition of wall painting in the Maratha land. Examples of this tradition have unfortunately not come down to us. About its existence there is little room for doubt, about its nature precious little can be said. This makes the task of a student who is out to identify its stylistic peculiarities extremely difficult - it is not possible to assert with any degree of certainty that this feature is indigenous or that feature is foreign. Keeping this qualification in mind a few points could be made out.

By the end of 1730 this land was opened up to cultural influences from Northern India- especially Malwa and Rajasthan. Contemporary records state in so many words this trend. Still more eloquent are the architectural monuments. Their affinity with the Northern tradition is obvious. Slightly later (or perhaps from much earlier times) influences from Southern India can be perceived. Again seeking guidance from tectonic activity, the temple ^{forms} ~~forms~~ and the Shikaras^h would attest to this phenomenon.

The search for its own identity was quite a long process for Maratha art and it is only by the 1780 that works with a distinctly local flavour are encountered.

In the choice of the subject matter, in its treatment, in the material culture reflected in the murals, local preferences find a clear expression. Themes like Samudramanthan, Draupadi-swayanvara or for that matter the ten incarnations had one all-India prevalence. But Ganesha and Saraswati occur more often in keeping with local folk tradition as found in Dashavatara dramas. Krishnalila themes are not as recruitment as in Northern works nor are the episodes from Ramayana or Shivapurana as common as in the South. Among the secular themes, the typical Marathi 'Phugadi' finds a place quite often. A forceful and vigorous if not unbroken or fluid line marks Maratha murals. The faces are distinctly local so are costumes. The Poona Pagadi and the dhoti with red border is quite characteristic, so is the nine yard sadi. A tight knot of hair behind the head, known as 'Khopa' and the horizontal kumkum mark spread over the entire forehead known as 'Chiri' mark out Maratha female figures. The Mukuta or the Sand-clock seat or the Kamalasana speak of contacts with Southern tradition. Architectural features of structures used in the background are pronouncedly local.

However, these differences should not be stretched too far. In all artistic creation tradition always has a very important say. In ^{the} present case one cannot ignore the great debt that the Maratha artists owe to Malwa, Rajasthan on the other hand and South India on the other. It would therefore be in the fitness of things to ~~con~~^oclude that Maratha murals are a local expression of a great and ancient tradition that had a countrywide prevalence.

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SECTION FOUR

ILLUSTRATIONS.







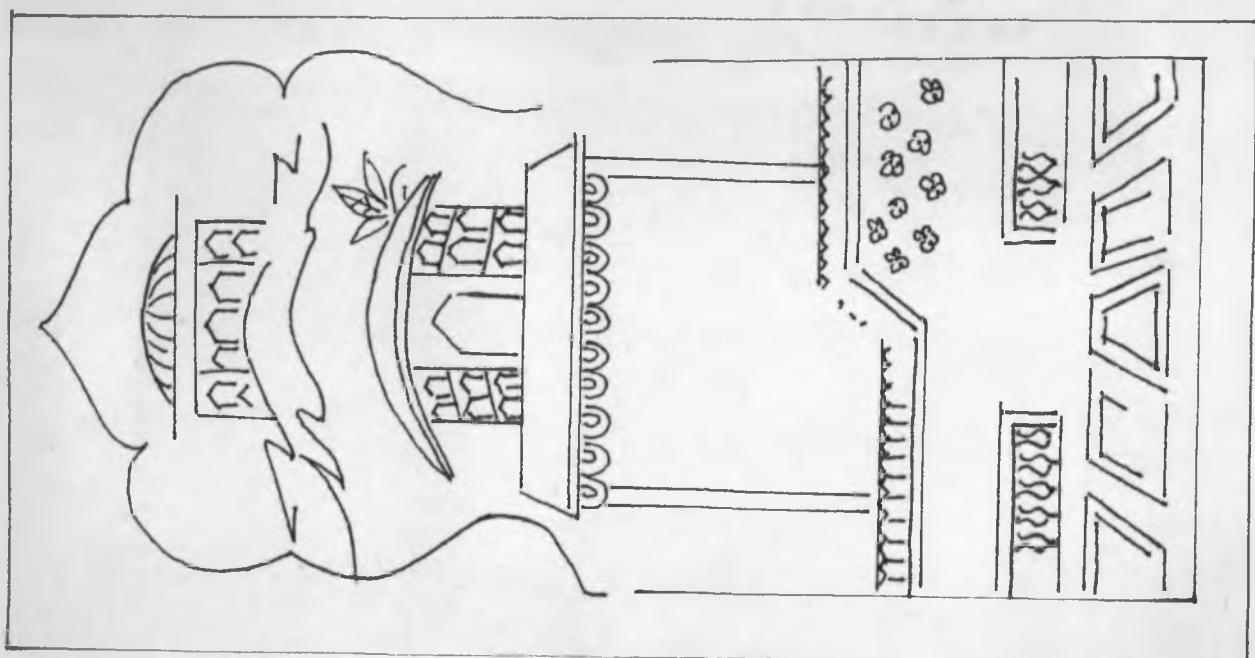
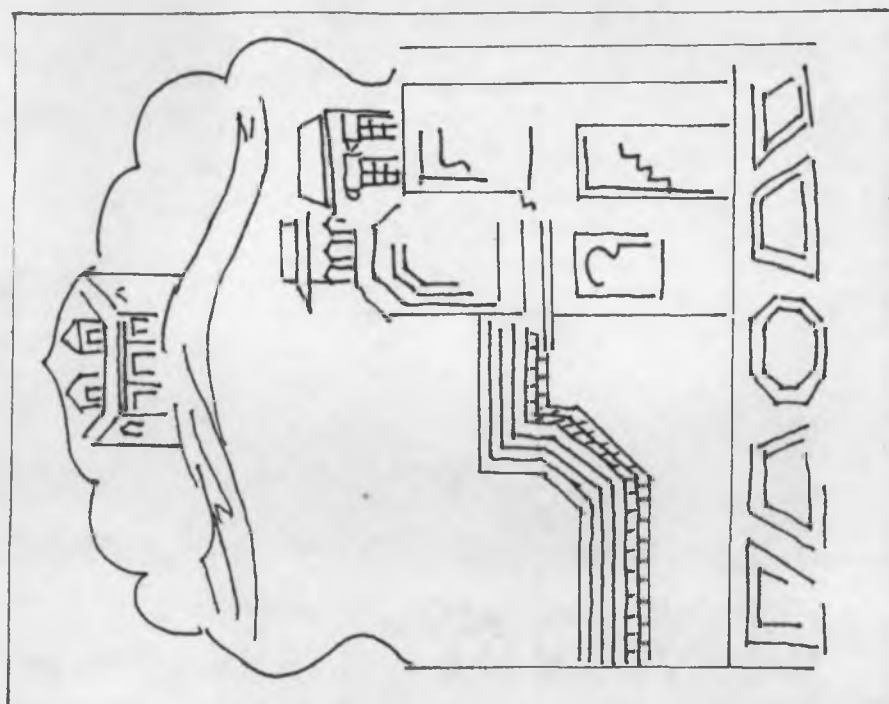


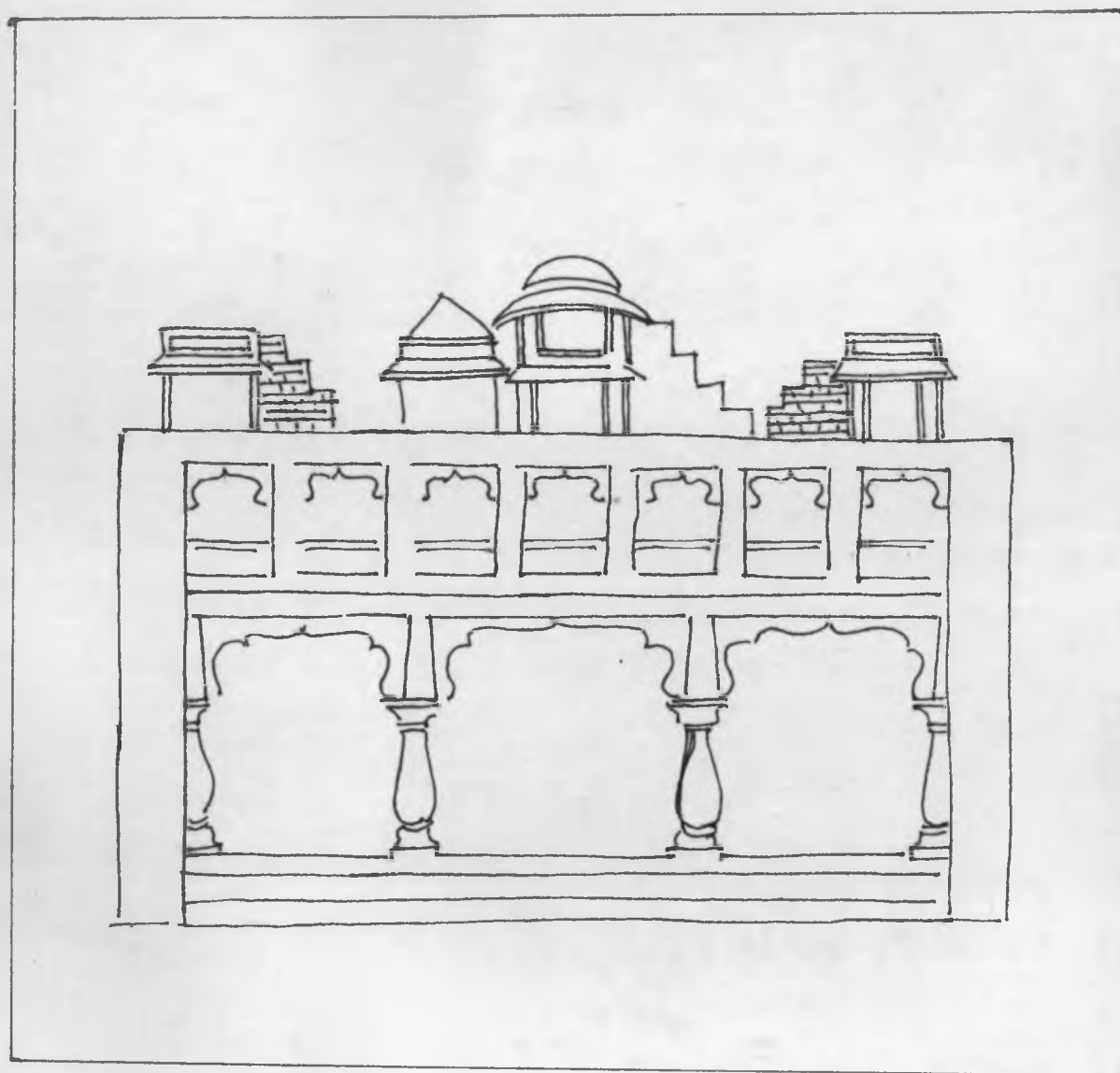














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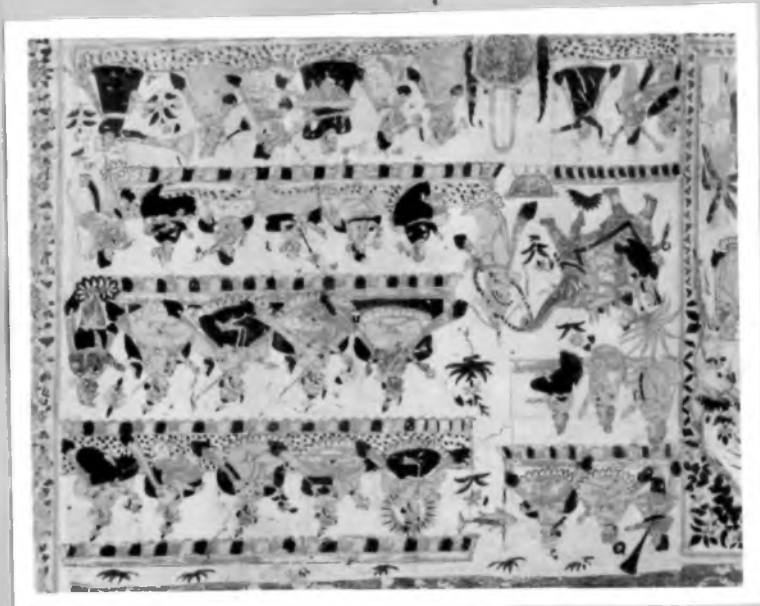
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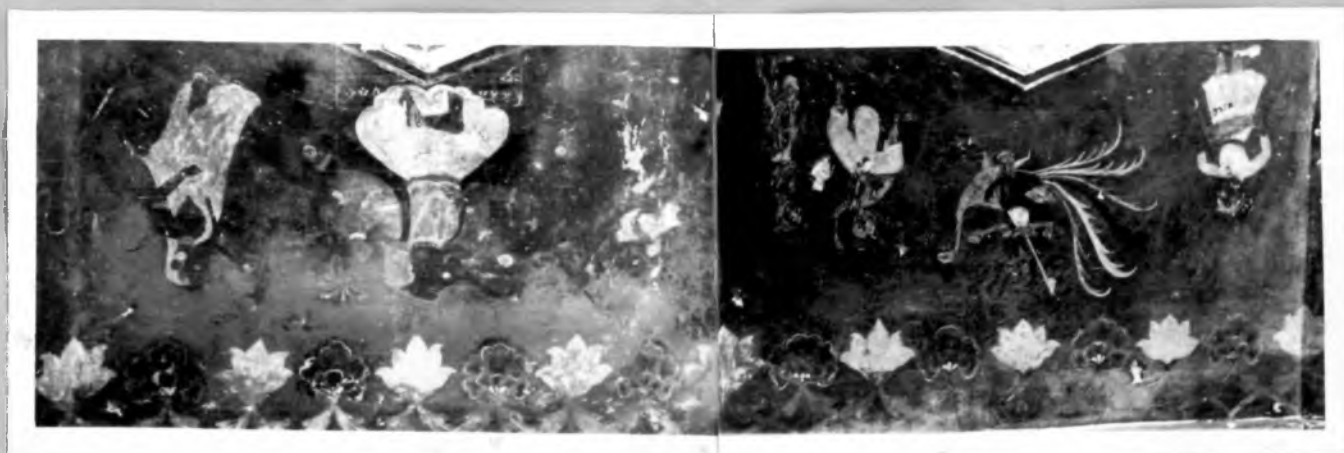
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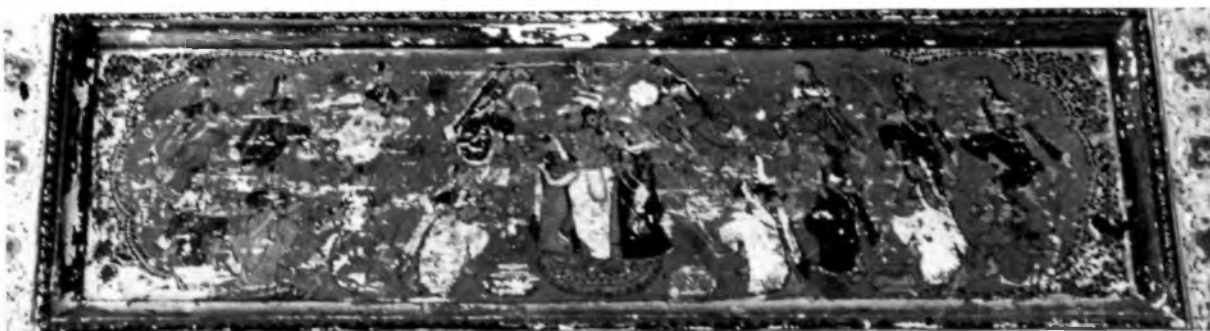
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b



c



d



a



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q





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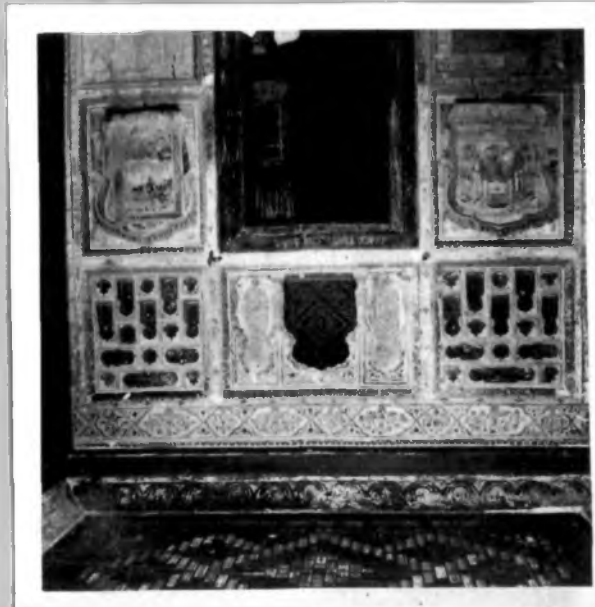
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